

ABILITY VERSUS WILL:  
THE REASON INSURGENTS SURRENDER

BY  
JASON RUESCHHOFF

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## APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DR. STERLING M. PAVELEC (Date)

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DR. STEPHEN E. WRIGHT (Date)

## **DISCLAIMER**

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Major Jason Rueschhoff is a 1997 graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. He graduated from Undergraduate Pilot Training in 1998 and went on to fly A/OA-10s. He was stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ and Pope AFB, NC. Major Rueschhoff attended the USAF Weapons School and graduated June 2004. He then went to Osan AB, ROK as the squadron and wing weapons officer. Following his overseas tour in South Korea, Major Rueschhoff was again stationed at Davis-Monthan AFB where he was part of the initial cadre instructing the A-10C. He is a senior pilot with over 2200 flying hours. He has a bachelor's degree in Management from the United States Air Force Academy, a master's degree in Military Operational Art and Science from Air University, and a master's degree in Aerospace Studies from Air University. In July 2010, Major Rueschhoff became a joint planner for U.S. Pacific Command.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes the concept of surrender in both conventional and unconventional war. It closely investigates the ties between military ability and political will in the inducement of surrender. The study begins with a discussion of terminology and definitions as boundaries for the arguments that follow. It then argues that the three main decision points in war all involve a choice: to start a war, to continue a war, and to end a war. The remainder of the work contends that success in war centers on altering the pertinent aspects of that decision making. The study then examines the German and Japanese situations in World War II that ended in their surrender. The author highlights both ability and will as components that form what the author refers to as capability level. He then explains that the nation(s) with superior relative capability levels have better chances for wartime success. Absolute superiority is not as important as relative superiority in war. The study then examines unconventional war from a general perspective and discusses the applicable differences between it and conventional war with regard to military ability, political will, and surrender. The discussion dissects the French-Algerian War using it as an exemplar for an insurgency that, by conventional standards, should have surrendered but did not. The author proposes that efforts focused incorrectly on military ability and not political will ultimately granted the FLN political victory even though they were militarily defeated. The conclusion is that while there is no template solution that when applied yields an insurgent surrender, one should consider several factors in order to increase the chances of the enemy choosing surrender. The main idea is to focus on military ability when engaged in conventional war and political will when engaged in unconventional war in attempt to change enemy decision making variables. The sources of power for actors in these different spectrums of war are also different and by not concentrating on the right leverage points, actors will choose to continue fighting and delay surrender or not choose it at all.

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## Introduction

*Despite the best that has been done by everyone—the gallant fighting of our military and naval forces, the diligence and assiduity of our servants of the State and the devoted service of our 100,000,000 people—the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage, while the general trends of the world have all turned against her interest...Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization...This is the reason why we have ordered the acceptance of the provisions of the joint declaration of the powers.*

*-- Emperor Hirohito's radio address ordering surrender, Aug 14, 1945*

The United States seemingly understands what surrender looks like. The successes of WWII provide the visualization, whether good or bad, that has set the bar for what surrender should approximate in all wars since. On September 2, 1945, top military and civilian leaders from both victor and vanquished lined the deck of the USS Missouri as the Japanese Foreign Minister signed the official surrender on behalf of his government. It was a momentous occasion marked by ceremony and formality that officially ended the Second World War.

While the picture of formal surrender on the deck of a battleship is still somewhat vivid, even six and a half decades later, one is hard pressed to generate another such image where the surrender was so concrete and official. As conflicts move further from the conventional realms that define both World Wars and tend more and more toward limited objectives and means, clear-cut surrenders have become more elusive.

The rise of non-state actors in conflict against nation states appears to be a growing trend and gives leaders a different set of variables to consider in going to war, in continuing to fight, and in achieving surrender. Stark examples of insurgent groups formally surrendering in situations similar to the one involving Japan and the Allies on the deck of the USS Missouri in 1945 do not leap to mind. It is difficult to image top US and South Vietnamese military and political leaders in the 70s taking elaborate measures to ensure formality and ceremony marked any anticipated Viet Cong surrender. To think that there may have even been an official procedure to commemorate surrender is closer



to fantasy than anything. US and South Vietnamese heads of state and military would have been satisfied if the Viet Cong aggression simply went away with no ceremony making it official; no ticker tape parade, no marching band playing the National Anthem, no dignitaries with profound speeches. If one fails to technically designate and end condition, then how does one know when, and even if, an insurgency is, in fact, over?

No doubt, there are differences between a conventional fight and one involving a non-state actor, and those differences translate to how and why those actors surrender as well. The challenge, then, is to determine what is it that forces an insurgent group to surrender. And, can one actor really force another actor to do something anyway, or is it a matter of choice?

This paper argues that the differences between conventional war and what will be termed unconventional war are marked and are best understood by considering the roles both military ability and political will play. In conventional war, ability is the more prominent factor leading to surrender while in unconventional war, it is will.

### **Roadmap**

This paper examines three case studies to uncover the interaction and inter-relation between military ability and political will and the key roles they play in surrender decisions. The first two cases analyze state actors fighting a conventional war, using the surrender context of Germany and Japan in World War II, respectively. The third case study examines unconventional warfare in Algeria. The French-Algerian War provides a good exemplar for conflict between a nation state and an insurgent group. These case studies establish a common starting point, drawing forth insights that provide a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

This paper lays the foundation in Chapter 1 by delineating between common terms building upon their definitions, creating a well understood framework from which to begin a meaningful analysis. It lays the groundwork necessary for the remaining chapters by defining war, surrender, conventional and unconventional war, and discussing the main players in each. Each type of warfare and each type of participant have gradations that the paper examines in order to discover linkages or greater disparities that will prove useful to the overall appreciation of surrender.

Chapter 2 will investigate the conventional war cases of German and Japanese surrender in World War II. The discussion will outline the Combined Bomber Offensive (CBO) in Europe and U.S. bombing campaigns in the Pacific and their motivations, intentions, and expected outcomes and how the Allies interwove them to affect military ability and political will. The section then outlines the outcomes of the bombing and discusses options available to both the Germans and the Japanese and why they surrendered. The concluding part of Chapter 2 will discuss the conventional war aspects of the conflicts in the European and the Pacific campaigns, setting the stage for the complementary unconventional aspects of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 will shift focus to unconventional war. It will discuss characteristics unique to insurgent activities as compared to those of nation-states. The examination will concentrate on the motivations for hostilities. The second half of Chapter 3 then presents the central case study, the French-Algerian War (1954-1962). It will address the historical background leading up to the official commencement of hostilities and provide a brief narrative covering the significant actors and events that occurred during the next decade paying close attention to the role of military ability and political will. It will then discuss the peculiar outcome of the war where the insurgents surrendered militarily only to triumph politically. The discourse will center on the circumstances that lead to insurgents' decision to surrender, again highlighting ability and will as the overarching concepts throughout the war.

The conclusion will summarize the pertinent differences between conventional war and unconventional war paying particular attention to how military ability and political will play key roles in surrender. It then will highlight how efforts and operations focused on the lesser influential of the two aspects fails to achieve the desired results of an insurgent surrender.

# Chapter 1

## Building the Foundation

*War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.*

-- John Stuart Mill

## Background

War is a human endeavor. While available technology and its utilization can swing the outcome one way or another, the decision to fight, how to fight, and when to stop all lay in human hands. The idea that man actively chooses to engage in combat as well as chooses whether to continue it is central in appreciating that man must also choose to surrender. Man seems to understand more readily the reasons to start and continue and, as a result, more thoroughly examines these causes. Motives ending wars and namely the issue of surrender, however, are much less so and, consequently, more overlooked. Even basic students of Thucydides can espouse his war motivators such as fear, honor, and interest.<sup>1</sup> The fear of conquest, the fear of enslavement, or even the fear of death can drive mankind to take up arms against one another. As globalization shrinks the world and interconnects small and large powers alike, fear of the unknown can spark war and conflict; a lack of cultural or political understanding can give way to military force. Similarly, a quest for honor commonly referred to as prestige, can pit nations and people against one another. For example, striving to maintain the lead in space technology facilitated a less than friendly competition between the USSR and the United States in the 1950s and 60s, nearly erupting in nuclear war. Each was trying to take the technological lead and, thus, prestige from the other. Interest tends to be the one variable linking the other two. Threats to a nation's interests often heighten fear, whether the interest is a natural resource or a strategically significant geographic point on a map.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert B. Strassler, ed., *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1996), 405.

Often, man juxtaposes honor with interest as a genesis for war. A loss of prestige in the international realm may have ramifications affecting any number of a nation's interests from weakened bargaining positions in negotiations to diminished confidence from friendly nations in alliances.

Fear, honor, and interest are good starting points in discussing why men fight. Noted historian James McPherson draws his readers to two more specific reasons men will take up arms against one another. In his book, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, he argues those who decide to engage in warfare do so originally for duty, honor, and patriotism.<sup>2</sup> He continues his argument by saying that as the fighting ensues, motivation changes, and the inspiration to continue taking up arms lies in each soldier's desire to ensure the well being of the man next to him.<sup>3</sup> Once in the throes of battle, man feels a certain obligation and fraternalism that drives him onward. McPherson contends that man begins for patriotism but remains for fraternalism. It is the desire not to let the man next to him down that keeps one engaged in the fight. While McPherson's labels and notions are unique, he could just as easily categorize them as Thucydidian interest- or honor-driven as well.

Distinguished researcher and military historian Azar Gat takes a slightly different approach in his argument concerning the origins of conflict. He prescribes to the evolutionary theory and argues conflict is a result of a Darwinian instinct that manifests itself in competition for resources.<sup>4</sup> Gat continues by explaining that primarily somatic and reproductive aims drive the competition which heightens in both scarcity as well as abundance.<sup>5</sup> When resources like animals or crops or suitable mates become scarce, competition heightens due to a low supply to demand ratio. A lower amount of supply yields a relatively higher demand and a struggle for those resources ensues. On the other hand, when resources are expanding and becoming more abundant, Gat maintains man, in the state of nature, will increasingly desire the proverbial "lion's share" of those resources making abundance as well as scarcity a source of conflict among man.<sup>6</sup> While

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<sup>2</sup> James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>3</sup> McPherson, 85-90.

<sup>4</sup> Azar Gat, *War in Human Civilization* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 137.

<sup>5</sup> Gat, 138-9.

<sup>6</sup> Gat, 139.

Thucydides' grounds for conflict overlap Gat's ideas, Gat brings yet another perspective to considering war as a human endeavor.

Beyond the reasons for warfare, man's need to fight to the best of his ability helps define the conduct of war. Throughout time theorists have developed and preached countless methods of how to fight and win more effectively. From ideas such as Sun Tzu's use of spies to gain key intelligence on the enemy, to Clausewitz's role of uncertainty and chance in battle, to Liddell Hart's indirect approach, each hopes to provide the best ways to conduct warfare.<sup>7</sup> Each theorist had a certain set of tools with which to work, a certain context that helped him to derive his respective theory. Clausewitz steeped himself in Napoleonic warfare, while Liddell Hart was at the cusp of armor, aerial, and mobile warfare. No doubt, new techniques and advancing technology had a hand in theory. Each novel idea, whether how better to deceive a field army while flanking it or how to improve the accuracy of projectiles by rifling barrels, brought about a progressively more efficient and effective way of destroying one's enemy in an almost macabre antithesis to Darwin's belief: an "evolution of death."

Ideally, man hopes to achieve a better state of peace by starting and continuing a war. Actors exist whose decisions appear irrational and based only on a desire for violence for violence's sake. Fortunately, these instances are extremely infrequent as even terrorists typically have political goals they hope to achieve through their actions. The end of a war is the start of a gradation of peace. In the worst case, the violence has waned at least minimally or the status quo remains, but in the best case reconstruction, reform, and stability permeates the nation's environment. Man realizes true peace.

Most times, however, the resulting war termination situation is somewhere in the middle of the spectrum between a utopian-type peace on one side and simply a slight decrease in violence on the other. One side hopes to claim that it has won and, by default, the other has lost. This is not always the case. Much literature has surfaced regarding the term "victory," and achieving total or complete victory is rare if not nonexistent. A tradeoff is almost certainly involved where neither belligerent quite

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<sup>7</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation* by Samuel B. Griffith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 231 and Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 85, 104 and B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1991), 5.

obtains what they hoped to at the outset. J. Boone Bartholomees delves into the intricacies of victory in his article, “Theory of Victory” and develops a spectrum of success. He discusses multiple degrees of victory based on initial objectives and actual results. Bartholomees’ argues that, “a conceptual scale of success runs from defeat through losing, not winning, tying, not losing, winning, and victory with shades and gradations between each point.”<sup>8</sup>

At first glance, surrender would appear closer to defeat than to victory for the vanquished, but the degree is dependent upon the conditions surrounding the terms of the surrender. Even unconditional surrender will not constitute victory in Bartholomees’ model because, as will be discussed later, unconditional surrender is not truly unconditional.

Where actors see themselves on his success spectrum plays a large role in their decision to end war. The closer to the “victory” end of the spectrum the actor believes they will be at war termination, the more apt they are to choose to end it. This is not to say that an actor who sees itself at the opposite end of victory, one degree away from failure, will not choose to end the war. They base their decision on what they realistically hoped to achieve by resorting to violence. If, for example, Nation A was invaded by an overwhelmingly more powerful Nation B, anything short of complete victory for B might be considered relative failure and unacceptable. On the other hand, Nation A, fully expecting subjugation, might be content with any outcome on the spectrum that is to the right of defeat. Perspectives and expectations matter, but what is it that drives the decision to start war?

### **Choices for War**

Why men fight and why they fight the way they do really comes down to a single word: choice. While this may seem frivolous at best, a deeper understanding will prove otherwise. Choice permeates all phases of war from the decision to initiate war, to the decision to continue it and for what duration, to the decision to end it. Nations must choose to go to war; they must opt to continue fighting; they must decide when and if it is

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<sup>8</sup> J. Boone Bartholomees, “Theory of Victory” (*Parameters*, Summer 2008), 27.

time to quit as well. Every part of warfare is a choice, but man does not choose based upon whim.

Rational statesmen weigh the costs against the benefits. They determine the risks involved and the likely outcomes, and they calculate the chances of success against the chances of failure. Nations generally cannot afford to engage in warfare without some hope of winning. If devoid of hope at the time, they avoid it until there appears to be at least a reasonable chance of prevailing. Once the odds are more in their favor they may choose to engage.

Policy makers may choose to stall using empty negotiations or peace talks until the scales tip in their favor. Then again, they may elect to negotiate for peace in earnest simply because they gain the advantage and the commensurate bargaining power. They tie the expected type of engagement to having a ‘reasonable chance of winning.’ Choosing to attack or to defend involve different calculations and must be tied to capability to do either. Clausewitz maintains that the defense is the stronger form of war, a belief especially pertinent to leaders of weaker nations.<sup>9</sup> Those who are unable to maintain the initiative may choose a defensive war with the goal of keeping the status quo, preserving territory, and conserving resources. A stronger nation may also choose an offensive strategy. Either way, they have the *choice* of whether to fight or not, and if the choice is to fight, they can choose what type of war in which to engage.

Some argue that if an attack occurs, the idea of choice is null and void. An actor under attack opts for self and will usually fight regardless of the expected outcome. While the motivation to respond in kind is greater if attacked than if not, it would be foolish to simply retaliate without believing the benefits at least balance the costs. If one expects inevitable and utter defeat with little gained in return, then he will most likely be pursue a different course of action. The key, however, lies in the belief of the outcome, not necessarily the truth. In 1939, when German soldiers crossed the Polish border, Poland used force in response. With hindsight, analysts observe that it was uncertain Poland would prevail and, thus, should not have gone to war. Poland undoubtedly did not think utter subjugation would be the end state and, as a result, felt that war was the

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<sup>9</sup> Clausewitz, 84.

most correct path.<sup>10</sup> If belief fails to match reality, leaders make errant decisions to go to war, but there is still a choice. Polish statesmen certainly weighed the perceived costs against the perceived benefits before deciding force was the best option. Cost/benefit analysis explains much in rational decision making, but another economic concept can also play a role.

Choosing to fight can also be the result of a quest for greater prestige and power. Even if the odds are against them for success, they may still choose force as statement to others. By not simply acquiescing, the actor sends an international message that even in the face of expected defeat, it will still fight. Other players then know that their choice to go to war could be more costly than anticipated, altering their own cost/benefit analysis. The act of fighting can ignite passion in the nation's people, inciting nationalistic fervor throughout propelling them to fight harder and more gallantly. If they hold on longer than most outsiders believed possible, even though they eventually succumb to the enemy's will, they achieve a level of victory that has far reaching effects internationally. They gain respect, honor, and prestige, and other actors account for these in future decision-making equations.

To some, the best option is to go to war, but it is more a question of the timing involved. Their advantage may lay in the initiative. If they wait for an attack, they would surely lose; however, by taking the offensive and attacking first, the power of the initiative and surprise could counter the nation's inherent weaknesses. They could, however, choose cooperation and compromise with their enemy. Others could argue that they could choose to accept the status quo in the hopes that the situation will stabilize.

The choice to take the initiative has its own minefield through which to navigate, however. Michael Walzer explains the most considerable one in his discussion of just war. In his book, *Just and Unjust War*, he argues that the concept of *jus ad bellum* centers on the right of self defense.<sup>11</sup> Walzer believes it is a nation's duty and right to protect itself and its people, but the dilemma for the state lies in the determination as to where that line should be drawn. When a nation wrestles with the decision of whether to

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<sup>10</sup> It could also be said that if Poland believed that subjugation was to be the result of Hitler's invasion, they may have fought harder.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000), 54.



go to war or not, where they draw that line has profound implications on the conduct as well as outcome of the war.

Walzer introduces the terms preventative and preemptive war. The first describes a situation of taking the initiative in the face of an imminent threat or attack from an enemy.<sup>12</sup> In this case, international opinions will most likely support the nation's decision to defend itself, considering it a just act. Contrarily, the second term describes striking even if the threat is not presently imminent but simply because it **may** become imminent in the future.<sup>13</sup>

Preemptive war crosses into a grey area concerning justice. If a nation decides to strike preemptively, then that choice would divide international opinions. Subsequent support for the nation will not be as forthcoming or as substantial, creating greater difficulties as the conflict ensues. *Jus ad bellum* is yet another factor to consider when deciding to go to war. Deciding to engage in war is just the first of many decisions a nation must address once hostilities begin, one of the main ones being whether to continue fighting or not.

### **Choices in War**

If all parties involved choose war, then the decision on how to conduct and whether to continue fighting still lies in the hands of the nations at odds. Nations may remain at war because they have not attained their goals. They may still need to quell the fear, achieve the honor, or protect the interest that drove them to choose war in the first place. Furthermore, they may feel that coercive force provides them the best avenue in which to achieve those goals. Negotiations may have been fruitless leading up to the commencement of hostilities and so it stands to reason that they may be worth little at this juncture as well. At times, peace may be on the horizon and participants see force as a means to attaining a more favorable bargaining position once at the negotiations table.

The negative aspects of continuing to fight however can be considerable and play an integral part in the decision calculus. Continuing the struggle will usually result in greater destruction and higher numbers of casualties. Typically nations think of wartime

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<sup>12</sup> Walzer, 75.

<sup>13</sup> Walzer, 75.

casualties as those that result directly from combat operations with the enemy, such as sniper fire, artillery barrages, and aerial bombardment.

Less often considered are the indirect casualties which can prove deadlier than direct ones. The effects of war's death and destruction result in many indirect casualties. As an example, a bombing campaign may target industrial buildings with the intent of crippling the enemy's ability to produce military equipment. The bombs falling on the buildings and the people inside them make up the direct casualties. The bombs that miss and destroy agricultural fields in proximity to the buildings then impede the farmer from producing crops, feeding his family and selling the excess at market or exchanging it for other necessities. Indirect casualties result from subsequent famines and diseases and can amount to higher numbers than direct casualties. Even the inability of the dead inside the buildings to subsequently provide for their families constitutes indirect casualties.

Planners tend to define casualties as direct or indirect based upon initial intended effects. Furthermore, the indirect casualties have a timeline that can extend several months, if not years. The effects can take some time to manifest. Choosing to carry on the fighting means the hostilities will last longer and inevitably, a longer timeframe means more losses for at least one side, if not all involved.

Choosing to continue fighting lengthens the timeline which has the potential to produce more loss. Paradoxically, it is for this reason that continuing to fight can also be somewhat beneficial. The difference lies in the perception of who is the aggressor in the struggle and their vulnerability to public or international opinion. As a general rule, if the aggressor side is impervious to world opinion, the length of a war and the corresponding public view will have little to no noticeable effect; however, the more a society shades towards democracy in which the public has a voice, the more a prolonged war as the perceived aggressor will detrimentally affect public support. The original cause for which a nation engages in warfare may become lost in the gruesome reality as fighting persists. Motivation to continue tends to wane as the conflict continues until the nation reaches a tipping point, where public outcry becomes louder than the original basis for fighting. In this case, the political costs may outweigh the benefits of continuing and the nation may choose, instead, to sue for peace.

While cost/benefit analysis drives statesmen in their choices, it is not the only economic concept that plays a role. Another is the idea of sunk costs. Economists rarely give much credence to them, saying sunk costs should not be involved in future decision making because they cannot be unpaid regardless of the decision made. There is much truth in this understanding, yet, by labeling battlefield losses as sunk costs, it fails to recognize the emotional aspects involved.

The calculating, rational person may be able to overlook thousands of dead and wounded in their determination of continuing war or not, but many see the casualties, instead, as reason to fight on. It is not uncommon to hear rallying cries such as, “Don’t let our brothers die in vain!” or “Fight for those who have gone before us!” The idea of sunk costs tends to lose the ‘sunk’ part of the phrase and just become a cost that must be made worthwhile. The onus then falls on those still alive and able to fight to continue the struggle in honor of the dead.

Deciding to continue the fight is one of the two viable options. The other, obviously is to end it. The discussion now turns toward the termination aspect of war.

### **Choices in Ending War**

Deciding to participate in or to continue to fight helps one understand the significance of choosing to end conflict as well. Statesmen and military leaders alike believe surrender is something they can force upon their enemy. They believe it is a coercive result. They tend to look at the issue as one of what they must do in order to force their enemy to lay down his arms. They often fail to understand that surrender is the enemy’s choice. Nation A can do everything that it believes it must to force Nation B to surrender, but those actions are somewhat irrelevant. It is Nation B’s decision that determines the matter.

Just as it was a choice to begin to fight and to continue to fight, it is a choice to quit as well. The adage that it takes two to tango does not necessarily hold for decisions involving war, however. More than one party is required to go to war, but one side can make unilateral choices with little regard to those of the other party. Only the aggressor needs to choose war for fighting to occur. The aggressor holds the key to war initiation, but the decision to continue is in any of the actors’ hands. If one wishes to continue fighting, the other must choose to accept or counter it, but either way, fighting will ensue.

When it comes to surrender, only one side is required to choose that option, and that decision belongs to the subdued. In other words, Nation A cannot force Nation B to choose surrender; they must choose it on their own. In summary, to initiate war, agency belongs to the aggressor; to continue war agency belongs to either side; to surrender and end war agency belongs alone to the side who wishes to quit.<sup>14</sup>

There are many reasons one would choose to quit fighting. As discussed in the previous paragraph, negative international or domestic public opinion may lead actors to decide the benefits of continuing are not worth the costs of a malevolent reputation on the world stage. They may also choose to surrender after obtaining their goals set at the start of hostilities. Goals of territory, resources, and political or diplomatic concessions can be attained without necessarily achieving military defeat of one's enemy, and can be enough to end the fighting. An actor may not reach all of its goals but surrender anyway to preserve what little it may have left.

Choosing to continue fighting will mean sacrificing more blood and treasure possibly to achieve minimal gains. Gat points out that in some circumstances, "...to give up the conflict unilaterally may mean even heavier losses, so both sides may be bound by the unregulated competitive/conflictual situation to stick to their guns until agreement for a cessation of hostilities can be reached."<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, if that belligerent continues regardless and is militarily defeated to the point where the sacrifice of blood and treasure will surely amount to no gains whatsoever, the prudent leader would surrender as well. Keeping in mind Clausewitz's idea that war is never over but merely interrupted by moments of peace, at times actors may surrender only to buy time to regroup and recuperate. When the time is right, that same party may again take up arms from a then more advantageous position only to enter the decision matrix yet again.

Another reason to surrender involves opportunity costs. Fighting a war entails a relatively grand amount of money, time, manpower, and energy. By surrendering, an actor may be able to focus its attention on other endeavors. Depending on its welfare,

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<sup>14</sup> Brute force provides an interesting corollary to the discussion. While the vanquished does have a choice, the decision is really about how much longer they think they are able to hang on. In brute force operations, the aggressor is typically so overpowering that choices tend to revolve around delaying the inevitable, asking "When?" not "If?" surrender will be chosen. It takes keen foresight to see the writing on the wall and cut one's losses in a situation such as this. Without that foresight, a strategy of attrition can end in annihilation.

<sup>15</sup> Gat, 141.

dedicating those resources to increasing the party's economic health or diplomatic position could prove more beneficial in the long run. Making a decision to do one thing will always negate the ability to do another, but it is the deft statesmen's charge to weigh opportunity costs and choose the most useful and helpful option for his people. The question then becomes what to choose if the best option appears to be continuing to fight, yet the populace does not have the stomach for more war.

Not only is the question of "why surrender" important in its own right, but it leads to an arguably more important question: that of "how." Answering why, unfortunately, tends only to find traction in limited academic circles while many operations-oriented decision makers care more about the how. They pose their concern by asking what must occur to force an enemy surrender or what conditions will make the enemy to give up. They pay more homage to the forceful coercion and fail to understand that the enemy is responsible for choosing surrender, not them.

A popular idea about how to fight and win has received much attention over the past half century. It centers on breaking the will of the enemy and by doing so getting him to surrender. The idea of attacking an enemy to defeat their will to fight permeates strategy today; however, the Allies made this option famous in World War II in order to bomb German cities.

The rationale was that after continuous bombing throughout the day and night with little reprieve, an exhausted and terrified German populace would voice its discord and anger with the government's plan and demand to end the war immediately. Allied planners had visions of downtrodden German civilians knuckling under at the mere thought of yet another bomb being dropped anywhere near them. Not all Allied leaders bought into this reasoning, however, and those that doubted its efficacy proved to be more correct than not.

Studies revealed that instead of demoralized German citizens, the persistent bombing had little effect outside the normal responses to aerial bombardment. The Birmingham-Hull report conducted by the British examined bombing raid effects on those cities and showed that no mass panic or antisocial behavior resulted.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>16</sup> Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945*(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 200.

continued bombing became routine. In his work, *The Social Impact of Bomb Destruction*, Fred Charles Ikle said that the results from studies of, "...Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Hamburg, and other areas of large bombings in World War II do not indicate that serious mass panic occurred at any time."<sup>17</sup> Civilian populations grew accustomed to the air raid sirens and explosions. It became the norm for Germans and not the exception.

Counter intuitively, the more the Allies applied coercive force through the air, the more the civilians resisted. In *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, Robert Pape says, "coercion by punishment operates by raising costs or risks to civilian populations. Punishment is not limited to hitting civilians in population centers. It may take the form of killing military personnel in large numbers to exploit the casualty sensitivity of opponents."<sup>18</sup> Pape goes on to say that his idea of "punishment," as was proven in Germany, is a relatively unsuccessful method in obtaining victory.

Throughout the majority of the war Allied bombing did not force the Germans to surrender. They finally did in 1945 but until then, staunch conviction in their beliefs and a growing anger toward Allied aggression fueled continued warfare. True, coercive force can narrow appealing options for the target and make some more attractive than others, but, ultimately, it is still the target actor's decision to make.<sup>19</sup>

At the foundation for the choice to surrender, much as it does for the choice to start and continue fighting, lies a cost/benefit analysis. If the force being applied by Nation A fails to raise the costs above the benefits Nation B may realize by continuing the struggle, it is not in Nation B's interest to put down its arms. Force is not always the means either. One can substitute incentives for force, turning the previous idea on its head; if Nation A can raise the incentives, or benefits, to surrendering higher than the benefits of continuing hostilities, it then becomes in Nation B's interest to quit fighting.

Such incentive manipulation yields positive outcomes by increasing the apparent appeal of one option over another. Ideally, the target nation chooses the alternative the

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<sup>17</sup> Fred Charles Ikle, *The Social Impact of Bomb Destruction* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 15.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>19</sup> Coercion provides an opportunity for a side to make decisions based on whether to surrender, while, again, brute force operations lean heavily toward deciding when to surrender. Resistance may continue in brute force but at what cost and for how long? The outcome will likely be the same regardless: surrender. Coercion, however, contains more room for maneuver and the element of "If?" is still a realistic option.

other hoped they would select originally and freely makes their choice. As the gradations of force decrease, coercion takes on a less threatening appearance, decreasing tension and facilitating a more lasting choice with less angst or resentment. To manipulate those incentives in the desired direction, however, one must be fully aware of what it is that makes them more appealing to the target than any of the other alternatives. Deciphering these nuances is not an easy task when dealing with a relative unknown such as human interests. Clear answers are elusive, and danger lies in the ambiguity.

Imagine a world where that ambiguity was nonexistent, where the answers to what must be done, said, or offered to get an enemy to surrender were unmistakable. The answer would be a sort of Holy Grail of warfare saving countless lives, hours, and dollars. Knowing exactly what to do to get an enemy to raise a white flag would be the long sought after panacea to conflict. Ultimately, because others would know which buttons to push to induce surrender, conflict might subside. Not only would Nation A know what will tip the scales in its favor, Nation B will know as well.

However, it may become a fruitless endeavor that promises only to end with a stalemate, settled only by all parties compromising in the end. The end state may be the same and nations will see the futility in engaging in unnecessary and unproductive violence. In his book *Meanings of War & Peace*, Francis Beer indicates that long-term historical records show that although becoming more costly and producing more damage, wars are tending to occur less frequently and with shorter duration, perhaps indicating a future transition to a more peaceful world with less war.<sup>20</sup> Knowing exactly how to manipulate incentives *vis-à-vis* one's enemy and facilitating negotiations prior to conflict facilitate that trend toward a more peaceful world. Unfortunately, trouble spots would still be present when those incentives offered to an enemy are directly opposed to one's own incentives.

While omniscience would be useful in incentive manipulation, it is rather unrealistic. War is a human endeavor, and the ability to completely understand and predict human behavior is next to impossible. The adage that claims that which is worth having is worth working for is appropriate at this point. While an investigation into

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<sup>20</sup> Francis A. Beer, *Meanings of War and Peace* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 169.

precisely what it takes to induce surrender from an enemy may become a futile exercise, it will no doubt provide some key observations that can facilitate war termination strategic discussions down the road.

### Parameters

Before beginning the analysis, one must bound the argument to provide more useful results. Word choice is critical in determining the limitations necessary to exact a useful examination. Terminology is paramount to the discourse, and as Beer aptly notes, "...the unexamined term is not worth using. We cannot understand the products of our discourse if we do not understand the terms of the discourse itself."<sup>21</sup> Semantics matters, as does context. Neglecting either will yield a flawed comprehension of terms.

In any discussion concerning the details of warfare it is imperative to decipher exactly what constitutes war. It is equally important to understand who the players are, what defines them, and what makes them unique among others. Furthermore, to thoroughly drive to the heart of the matter with which this work deals, it is vital to discuss what comprises the end state, or more specifically, what constitutes surrendering.

To begin, the foundation must be laid for what defines war. Many definitions of war exist and there are perhaps as many as theorists who proclaim them. Some meanings are somewhat materially bankrupt while others stand out as substantial. In *The Command of the Air*, Italian air power theorist, Giulio Douhet claims, "war is a conflict of two wills basically opposed one to the other."<sup>22</sup> At first glance, his definition appears sufficient. Upon further inspection, however, one realizes it fails to delineate the nature of the conflict or the purpose of it.

Even Clausewitz, considered by many to be the premier war theorist, does not have one singular definition of war, signifying the conceptual struggle that permeates the understanding of war. One of Clausewitz's definitions, however, intertwines with that of Douhet, and it is there from which the discussion will proceed. In his authoritative work *On War*, he states, "war is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>23</sup> According to the Prussian theorist, war is about violent action and at its extreme does not

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<sup>21</sup> Beer, 27.

<sup>22</sup> Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans. Dino Ferrari (Tuscaloosa, AL: The Alabama University Press, 1942), 8.

<sup>23</sup> Clausewitz, 75.



include aspects of diplomacy, information, or others that play a role in conflict. His discussion of total war is strictly about the ferocity of force. When Clausewitz moves from the discussion of absolute and abstract war to a more reality-influenced war, he arrives at his well-known assertion that war is an instrument of politics. The effect of politics is part and parcel to the conduct of war.

An expansion of his definition is therefore necessary to include those facets that constitute a contest of wills, such as diplomacy and negotiations, continually operating in the background of violent means. Perhaps a more complete definition in light of the present interconnectedness of the world is appropriate at this juncture. For the purpose of this article, the author defines “war” as a contest of wills in which more than one antagonist use any means available to compel the enemy to do their bidding.

Using the term “war” alone, however, remains too broad for the intended analysis in this project. While “war” by itself leaves much to interpretation, simply adding a modifying word to it derives a completely different meaning and further focuses the term. Beer calls attention to this phenomenon in his discussion of Anterior Meaning Shifters. These modifiers are words juxtaposed to the original work that provide different ideas and concepts than that of the original word when it stood alone or from other combinations as well.<sup>24</sup> Beer modifies the word “war” with 148 different word groupings, each centering on the word “war.” All have different meanings simply by having another word directly in front of or behind them. For example, phrases such as “limited war,” “holy war,” “information war,” “just war,” and “hybrid war” are listed, and each is distinct from the others.

While similarities do exist between many of them, nuances granted from the modifying words provide key variations. Each phrase presents a distinct image and understanding of war. One must sift through the multitude of “war phrases” to establish the most appropriate definitional support for an argument’s basis. One could get mired in attempting to find a definition for an all encompassing term as “war”, so choosing precise modifying words to accompany “war” and defining the new term will prove more beneficial. It is not enough to simply use the term “war” alone.

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<sup>24</sup> Beer, 31-3.

Clausewitz advocates understanding the type of war in which one is engaged in order to fight it more effectively. He states, “We must, therefore, be prepared to develop our concept of war as it ought to be fought, not on the basis of its pure definition, but by leaving room for every sort of extraneous matter.”<sup>25</sup> War has many different facets, each providing another gradation to analyze.

One can examine the contest of wills that is war from two distinct perspectives. Nuanced degrees of war fill the distance between the two ends of the spectrum being dissected here: 1) fighting between large state military groups in which the means are relatively unrestrained and the goals are grand and 2) fighting between a large state military group and a smaller group whose resources and means are more limited and goals are more narrowly focused.

The first extremity of the scale dovetails nicely with an idea Clausewitz presents concerning the use of strength. He espouses that, unlike the recommendations of Liddell Hart and Sun Tzu to avoid the enemy where he is strong, one should pit his army’s strength against the strength of his enemy.<sup>26</sup> His idea conjures the image of Union and Confederate soldiers from the U.S. Civil War facing off across a battlefield, marching directly at one another, where the last man standing signifies the victor. Several of Beer’s terms seem to fit the first category, such as “high-intensity war,” “total war,” “unlimited war,” and “brutal war.” “Conventional war” provides the best boundaries for the discussion of the first category of fighting. In conventional war, two or more states wage open armed conflict with regular forces.<sup>27</sup> It is an open contest that personifies Clausewitz’s strength-against-strength idea.

Perhaps in what his most oft quoted sentiment, Clausewitz states, “war is merely the continuation of policy by other means.”<sup>28</sup> He aptly ties the military aspects with the political ones and believes military means must remain in balance with the political goals saying, “The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Clausewitz, 580-1.

<sup>26</sup> Clausewitz, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Martin van Creveld, “Modern Conventional Warfare: An Overview,” (discussion paper from NIC 2020 conference, May 2004), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Clausewitz, 87.

<sup>29</sup> Clausewitz, 87.

The link between the two facets is important when considering the second category of warfare. This study classifies the second category under several different types of warfare as well. “Guerilla,” “limited,” “insurgent,” “revolutionary,” “irregular,” “low-intensity,” and “small” all provide viable labels, but to directly contrast the conventional aspect and highlight the indirectness of the antagonists, the term “unconventional war” will be used. Whereas in conventional warfare the opponents are known and the use of regular forces are standard, participants in unconventional warfare are usually indigenous military or paramilitary forces who engage in covert, subversive, guerilla tactics not necessarily aimed at their enemy’s military forces and capabilities.<sup>30</sup> Overt action, while present at times, is not the mainstay of unconventional war.

A significant part of what distinguishes characteristics of both conventional war as compared to unconventional war is the cast of players. An understanding of the participants provides even more insight into the complex subject. Many apparent synonyms are used when discussing the participants in war, and admittedly, many have been used thus far in this work as well. Words such as parties, actors, states, men, nations, and sides are but a few of those terms. One must hone the definition in order to apply more appropriate labels.

In conventional war, the means and resources are not as limited and so the state typically wages war with relatively large, economically sound, militarily powerful, and politically stable institutions at its disposal. It is also diplomatically recognized, internationally engaged, exercises sovereignty, and has a rule of law accepted by its populace. Typically, its purpose is to protect its people, its national security, and its sovereignty. The study uses the terms “nation-states,” “nations,” or “states” when describing the actors in conventional warfare. In WWII, mass armies of uniformed soldiers faced off against one another in the field of battle. Each knew who their enemy was and could recognize them as combatants.

On the unconventional side, no stipulation exists that all sides involved must be indigenous paramilitary organizations; in this study a nation-state will comprise one side. The opposing side will be considered an indigenous group that may be known

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<sup>30</sup> Commander-in-Chief, USSOCOM, *United States Special Operations Forces Posture Statement, 2003-2004* (Tampa, FL: USSOCOM, 2003), 36-7.

internationally but not as a legitimate, sovereign entity to broker deals in matters concerning their homeland.

Their purpose is to alter the status quo, change the government and its processes, and attain some form of presently non-existing rights. They can use both violent and nonviolent means, but this discussion will focus on those that primarily use violence. Revolutionaries, rebels, and guerillas all seem to fit the description. The connotations associated with these terms tend to bar, somewhat, the importance of political maneuvering in the endeavor, while the term insurgents covers the duality more completely. Therefore, this analysis defines unconventional war as a contest of wills between a nation state and an insurgent group using any violent means available to compel the other to do their will.

With a better understanding of both extremes along the spectrum of war and the respective participants the study discusses below, it is time to approach the issue of the end state. Wars can end in many different ways, but the focal point of this discussion is surrender. Again, many terms exist that approximate a traditional meaning of surrender: “to give up,” “to quit fighting,” or “to lay down one’s arms.” Some similar terms are “capitulation,” “ceasefire,” and “armistice.” They are nuanced terms, but ceasefire and armistice lean toward merely a break in the fighting while capitulation is closer to more permanent peace.

Clausewitz would argue that peace is only temporary and is nothing more than just a break in hostilities that may redevelop at another point in time, saying, “the defeated state often considers the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date.”<sup>31</sup> Taken to literal extremes, if two sides engage in war and then sue for peace only to reengage later, Clausewitz’s analysis would be correct in that peace was, in fact, only temporary. He provides an interesting point but if taken quite literally, peace would need to span an infinite amount of time to disprove him.

Since one cannot record this literal time period, the examination here must apply some limitation in order to proceed usefully; therefore, the study introduces the idea of inevitability. When fighting ceases if root causes remain unresolved, sources of friction

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<sup>31</sup> Clausewitz, 80.

persist, or other indicators of continued tension remain, a renewed conflict at some point is inevitable. If one believes that war is inevitable, then he or she cannot consider peace a true condition and, so, one cannot consider a surrender that leads to the cessation of fighting a true outcome in the terms of this analysis. The point is that although the fighting ceases for a certain amount of time, if the surrender was not given in hopes of attaining a lasting peace and, instead, was merely a ruse to stall until a more advantageous time to reinitiate violence presented itself, it will simply be considered a break in fighting and not a surrender.

If, however, after one establishes long-term peace by granting a legitimate surrender, the conflict begins anew due to the other side recommencing hostilities because of a significant contextual change that ignites new grievances or rekindles old ones, then the previous surrender will still remain valid for the purposes of this investigation. Thus, because choosing to surrender is a key component in the analysis, there must be alternatives available to the party considering it. They need to have the ability to continue resistance. If one side destroys the other to such a point that only an insignificant number remain and the other side's only choice is to quit fighting or face complete annihilation, then the resulting surrender condition does not fit within the bounds of this discussion.

A party, one side or another does not necessarily have to believe they can be victorious. They simply must have the means to maintain a possibility of attaining more of the goals for which they chose to fight originally or to lengthen the conflict a problematic period of time to the aggressor. Continuing the conflict is still viable from an ability standpoint but political will is lacking. When the combined level of military ability and political will are relatively higher than one's opponent, a better chance for success exists. The term "capability level" describes both the requirements of ability and will an actor needs to effectively wage war. It is this capability level that helps explain the reason some surrender.

A relatively high level of both is required to mount a credible resistance, but it is the overall relative level that matters. One actor could edge out the other militarily, but the other side could more than make up the difference through political will. Similarly, another group may have the far superior military force but lack considerable will to fight

granting their adversary victory. The Axis powers had a higher capability level at the start of WWII as evidenced by the success of the German Blitzkrieg operations and the popular desire to achieve their *Lebensraum*. As the war progressed, the Allies gathered momentum in both political will and military might, resulting in a strategic shift where the Allies' capability level surpassed that of the Axis. Germany eventually surrendered in Europe as did Japan in the Pacific. Without a comparatively higher capability level, surrender is generally the only viable option.

## Chapter 2

### Conventional War

*The quickest way to get it [the war] over with is to go get the bastards who started it. The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we can go home. The shortest way is through Berlin and Tokyo.*

*-- General George S. Patton*

*The alternative to surrender is prompt and utter destruction.*

*-- Allied Leaders to Japan, 1945*

### Background

In 1939, Europe erupted in violence and terror as Adolf Hitler and fascist Nazi Germany invaded Poland. France fell shortly thereafter. England, the USSR, and France made up the major Allied powers, while Germany, Italy, and Japan constituted the major Axis powers. The United States joined the fray the day after the Japanese bombed the US naval fleet at Pearl Harbor on Dec 7, 1941 and soon became the leading supplier of equipment and money amongst the Allied forces during WWII, though they had been contributing equipment via the Lend-Lease program since 1940. Italy presented the Allies with a nominal threat compared to that of Germany and, later, Japan. In both of the latter cases, the participating sides were nation-states engaged in open combat with regular forces, thereby clarifying the principal characteristics of the definition of conventional war. The Germans and Japanese eventually surrendered, and the roles of military ability and political will along with their intrinsic value to capability provide instructive insight and are excellent examples to analyze. The study will begin with the European Theater of Operations (ETO) and the role of Allied bombing in Germany's surrender.

### Germany

The WWII German case study provides an excellent illustration of the delicate interplay between military ability and political will. As will be seen, both German and

Allied capability levels were at odds with one another as well as internally. The two sides affected each other by not only their ability and will fluctuations, but also by their interaction with each other. Further, ability and will were focal points for strategic considerations in the conduct of war and, ultimately, of German surrender. A concise history covering a few key events and their implications will set the stage for a discussion on the German surrender, including available options, their limitations, and their viability. First, however, a brief summation of Allied theory is necessary to better understand how and why will and ability came to be the touchstones of their strategy.

Prior to the Allies dropping a bomb in anger on German soil, several theories emerged about the best way to employ the airplane in combat. Many believe that the Italian airpower theorist Giulio Douhet was the father of what current strategists know as strategic bombing. In his seminal work *Command of the Air*, he discusses the efficacy of using the aircraft to target what he calls “vital centers:” industry, transportation, communication, government buildings, and cities to target the will of the people.<sup>1</sup> All of the categories were important in targeting but it was their overall effect that Douhet sought. He felt that, “by bombing the most vital centers it could spread terror through the nation and quickly break down... [enemy] material and moral resistance.”<sup>2</sup> Douhet believed the critical lynchpin of success or failure was the will of the enemy to fight, and his thoughts were the basis for continued Allied efforts to break enemy resistance.

US Army General William “Billy” Mitchell built upon the ideas of Douhet and advocated for increasing the reliance and faith of military airpower. He believed that the air forces had surpassed naval forces as the leading guarantor of national security and pushed at every opportunity for increased air autonomy.<sup>3</sup> Airpower advocates felt that the airplane offered a panacea to prolonged conflict and could be the decisive factor in war. As a result of Douhet, Mitchell and others like them, efforts began to focus on new and improved ways to end the war in Europe quicker and cleaner. Douhet’s list of target types seemed to be the answer, but unforeseen obstacles such as enemy air defenses,

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Phillip S. Meilinger, “Giulio Douhet and the Origins of Airpower Theory,” ed. Col Phillip S. Meilinger, *The Paths of Heaven: The Evolution of Airpower Theory* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1997), 11.

<sup>2</sup> Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, trans. Dino Ferrari (Tuscaloosa, AL: The Alabama University Press, 1942), 57.

<sup>3</sup> William “Billy” Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power—Economic and Military* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The Alabama University Press, 1925), xvi.



weather and more significantly, bombing accuracy, impeded the cure-all that strategic bombing prophesied. The inability of the Combined Bomber Offensive (CBO), the name given to the joint Anglo-American bombing operation, to force Axis surrender by effectively destroying vital targets to industrially halt the enemy in a timely manner led many to consider shifting their targeting focus elsewhere. Their goal, however, was still to force surrender on the enemy.

Dropping weapons on precise locations such as industrial or governmental buildings presented a problem that technology was unable to solve at the time. Accuracy improved as the war drew to a close, but in the early stages of WWII the need for effects far preceded the technology and equipment available. Bombers often flew unprotected to target areas requiring the pilots to maneuver evasively in attempts to avoid air defenses, most repositions occurring near their drop points. Furthermore, the bombing and navigational systems' accuracies were abysmal by today's standards. The result was inaccuracy achieving little to none of the desired effect on the selected targets. In fact, British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill ordered a member of the War Cabinet Secretariat to investigate the rumors of bombing inefficiency. Daniel M. Butt came to several shocking conclusions:

...many bomber aircraft never found their target at all; even in good weather on moonlit nights, only two-fifths of bombers found their targets, but in hazy or rainy weather only one in ten did so. On moonless nights the proportion fell to a hopeless one in fifteen. In all circumstances, of those that reached their designated target only a third of them placed their bombs within five miles of it.<sup>4</sup>

Inaccuracies plagued both the British and US efforts throughout the war. Furthermore, it was not too difficult for the Germans to decipher the Allied plan of destroying key industrial, military, and government facilities and protect them with sufficient air defenses. As the military adage goes, anything worth destroying is worth protecting, which is exactly what the Germans did. Their substantial air defenses resulted in significant Allied bomber losses and forced many to rethink their strategy. Night bombing provided some respite from the demoralizing defeats the CBO endured, but the cover of darkness hindered accuracy even more. Inaccuracy and bomber losses led

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<sup>4</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities: The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in German and Japan* (New York, NY: Walker Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 46.

leaders eventually to choose different target sets, ones that would be easier to hit and most likely less well protected. The CBO altered its strategy to one of targeting cities or at least Douhetian nodes in close proximity to cities where misses would have some wartime impact by still affecting civilian populations.

The plan was not to keep the German citizens in a constant state of terror to disrupt the German machine, though the outcome ended up being exactly that. It morphed from one that intended to affect the German military ability to one that hoped to affect the German political will. The CBO hoped to break the will of the Germans. They believed that constant bombing and destruction would yield an industrially and militarily ineffectual Germany leaving them with no other option but to sue for peace.

The idea of breaking an enemy's will through bombing was not new and, in fact, had a leading proponent already involved in the CBO. Sir Arthur Harris, known as "Bomber Harris," was in charge of the Royal Air Force (RAF) Bomber Command from 1942-45. He is often credited with initiating area-bombing, the name given to the Allied plan to break the German will with airpower, though it was already in progress when he took command.

The RAF was not new to the game of aerial bombing and its leaders, like Harris, were aware of some of airpower's limitations, namely that of accuracy. Because of this, the RAF had already decided that night bombing cities could increase their aircrafts' and crews' protection while providing them with targets they could actually hit. Morality and ethics aside, it was a workable plan that the United States ultimately signed on to as well. Initially, however, because US aerial experience was somewhat lacking, they attempted to engage in precision bombing, targeting Douhet coined "vital centers." The results were no different and though they never officially acknowledged the switch to area bombing, the evidence proved otherwise.

On the US side was General Curtis LeMay, a staunch airpower and bomber advocate. He firmly believed that his bombers would lead the Allies to ultimate victory as evidenced by his claim that, "...Allied air power's systematic destruction of Nazi industry..." would neutralize the German threat.<sup>5</sup> His unfaltering faith in the efficacy of

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Tami Davis, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 224.

the bomber, often at the expense of other airpower arms, is renowned in air advocacy circles. In Europe LeMay with Harris and the CBO dropped nearly two million tons of bombs in Europe, while in Japan his bombers razed 58 cities in just four months with incendiary attacks, and introduced the atomic era with the use of the first two atomic weapons at Nagasaki and Hiroshima.<sup>6</sup> The results, however, were not what either commander had hoped for nor thought possible.

Germany proved to have an extremely resilient will and became more steadfast as the campaign wore on. Instead of German morale crumbling under the fear of yet another bombing raid or the horror of more death and destruction, Germans became more resolute and committed to their beliefs. United States Strategic Bombing Survey director Henry Alexander pointed out that Albert Speer, the Nazi Minister of Armaments and War Production for the Third Reich, and his associates conveyed, "... that the area bombing had no military effect."<sup>7</sup> His statement flew in the face of the efforts and expectations of the CBO; breaking the will of the German people to fight was difficult, if not impossible.

The Germans, however, maintained their resolution and determination to resist throughout the European campaign, even as their *Lebensraum* began to shrink on all sides. With the Soviets encroaching on German territory from the east and the Western Allies impinging on it from the west, the German situation continued to deteriorate. Yet, they chose to continue fighting, although it was ultimately in vain. If the Germans maintained the will to continue the war why did they choose to surrender?

Historians and analysts have presented a number of reasons and contributing factors to the eventual German surrender. Robert Pape offers one of the more popular beliefs which he labels "denial." In his description of a denial strategy, the enemy's military capabilities are targeted and, in essence, *deny* the enemy the ability to wage effective combat.<sup>8</sup> He goes on to say, "the evidence shows that it is the threat of military failure...and not the threat to civilians...which provides the critical leverage..."<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup> R.J. Overy, *The Air War 1939-1945*, (Chelsea, MI: Scarborough House/Publishers, 1980), 100, 120.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Gian P. Gentile, *How Effective is Strategic Bombing? Lessons Learned from World War II to Kosovo*. (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2001), 90.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 10.

<sup>9</sup> Pape, 10.

idea is that without the means with which to fight, the enemy will have no choice but to surrender.

Given the situation of a depleted German military ability, the available options were limited in late spring 1945. First, Germany could let their will drive the decision and continue to fight. In many minds, however, this option seemed somewhat suicidal due to the exhausted and overmatched military. To continue the fight at that point would surely have meant to do so until the last soldier fell. The war of attrition would have become one of annihilation.

Another option was to enter negotiations with the Allies. Two problems, however, would have impeded cooperation. The first is an idea brought to light in Thomas Schelling's *Arms and Influence* concerning bargaining room. He states that where objectives or goals are diametrically opposed, little room for negotiation exists.<sup>10</sup> Hitler's Germany wanted to expand and acquire room for expansion while at the same time eradicating inferior races considered to be the cause of many social ills.

The Allies, on the other hand, wanted German expansionist and genocidal behavior to cease. While they might have managed to compromise, Hitler had already proven untrustworthy by breaking his promises to leave Czechoslovakia and Poland unmolested. The precedent he set would, no doubt, obstruct future bargaining chances. Additionally, the Allies insisted on unconditional surrender further hindering negotiations.

The second issue encumbering possible peace negotiations was Germany's weakened state from which they would negotiate. By 1944, the Allies had begun to see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel in the war. They had made progress on both the eastern and western fronts by establishing dominance in the air, on the land, and at sea. Their confidence was building and they stood to gain more by choosing not to negotiate but instead use force to coerce the Germans into doing exactly what they wanted. As Germany's health of the state decreased, so did its chance of successful bargaining. She was in a paradoxical situation. It seemed the best time to negotiate for peace was when she was her strongest and had more leverage. This corresponds to when it would have been more beneficial for the Allies to settle than continue fighting. Yet, it

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 7.

is precisely at that time when Germany must have thought that she could achieve all her initial aims using force and continued to press the fight, slowly dissipating her strength and bargaining power.

The third option available to Germany was to surrender and preserve what was left of her country, people, land, and dignity. Surrendering could provide a break in the fighting and might allow the Germans a reprieve similar to that of the 1919-1939 interwar period. The Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I was meant to keep Germany from rearming and becoming a threat once again. Because it was not properly enforced, a resurgent Germany was able to violate the agreement and rearm. At the start of World War II, Germany was stronger than it had ever been. The relative peace of the interwar period granted Germany the time to recoup, grow, and gain strength. By choosing to surrender to the Allies in WWII, Germany could possibly experience the same type of reprieve they were allowed after WWI.

The events leading to the Treaty of Versailles were in fact the very reasons for German desire to rearm. In 1918, all sides agreed to a ceasefire in the hopes of achieving lasting peace. The Allies placed the Germans under the Allied thumb in the Treaty with little that Germany could say in the matter. This apparent injustice bolstered German will and once ability was recouped enough to provide a viable outlet for that will Germany rose again.

Despite the differing circumstances between the situation in 1918 and that of 1945, Germany experienced a much needed and utilized break in fighting and had the possibility for another if they chose to surrender. The break in fighting during the interwar period proved the Clausewitzian belief that the outcome in war is never final.<sup>11</sup> That there were similar thoughts about a possible recuperating period after surrendering during WWII is not too far-fetched. Whatever the justification, the Germans chose surrender in 1945, but they were not the only Axis power to lay down their arms.

The Allies crippled the German military, severely depleting their ability. German political will peaked mid-war but then began to diminish steadily until 1945 when it hit an all time low. The levels of ability and will were not high enough to compensate for

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<sup>11</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 80.

the other. The result was an overall low capability level that translated into defeat, a defeat that was realized through German surrender.

### **Japan**

Much like Germany, Japan provides another vivid example of the interaction of military ability and political will in conventional war and surrender. Both pillars together constitute a capability level that affects choices for, in, and to end war. The examination covers the role of will and ability in operations and implications on effectiveness in obtaining Japanese surrender. A brief history of significant events and players is necessary to fully grasp key issues leading to the fall of Japan. The study delves into options the Japanese had available to them based on their levels of ability and will and discusses the practicality of those options. A section on unconditional surrender and its viability in the Japanese example closes out the case study. It begins, however, with a continuation of theory in the ETO and how it evolved in Japan.

The Japanese surprise attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941 shocked US citizens and created an intense feeling of hatred and desire for revenge. German surrender boosted US confidence, and emphasis was refocused east toward an enemy who many felt dishonorably attacked the United States. They had just fought and won a harsh war against a robust competitor, and leaders, as well as the American public felt that winning against such a substandard and backward nation as Japan should be relatively simple.

By the time the Pacific campaign was in full swing, most reservations about bombing civilians became an afterthought. In the minds of several key military and political chiefs, it was the aspects of area bombing that garnered an Allied victory in Europe, and it made sense to them to apply the same strategy in Japan. To deter any questions of area bombing's morality in Japan, US strategists argued its necessity due to the interspersed industry within civilian areas.

In her book, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, Tami Davis Biddle highlights the belief that the Japanese economy was extremely reliant upon small home-based industries located in cities near major factories. Planners trusted that by destroying feeder businesses in the cities, it would impede the flow of vital parts and encumber

production.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, it would be nearly impossible to precisely target industrial, military, and government buildings as they were co-located and in close proximity to Japanese homes, places of worship, and other areas they may not normally target.

The United States based its idea of how best to attack Japanese targets on lessons from a devastating earthquake that shook Tokyo in 1923. The resulting firestorm provided the Committee of Operations Analysts with useful targeting intelligence. The damage caused by the Tokyo fire illustrated the possible efficacy of using incendiary bombs against the wood and paper Japanese cities.<sup>13</sup> With an apparent feeling of justification and a viable plan of execution, the air forces took bombing to a whole new level. Their goal was to destroy key pieces Japanese industry fielded forces, rendering their defenses ineffective. The focus was on lowering Japanese capability by targeting their ability to fight. Allied leaders hoped bombing's complete destruction of the Japanese military would diminish their will to fight. If it did not, however, their diminished ability would prohibit significant resistance.

General Douglas MacArthur's famous Pacific island hopping campaign demonstrated the Japanese soldiers will to fight. Some of the bloodiest and costliest fighting occurred in the Pacific islands. The battle for Iwo Jima alone lasted just over a month, where approximately 110,000 US soldiers attacked a Japanese force of only about 18,500. US losses totaled nearly 30,000 KIA and wounded while the Japanese casualties were nearly total; only a few hundred survived.

The Japanese demonstrated their total commitment and willingness to die for their Emperor and country; their will appeared unconquerable. Japanese kamikaze pilots baffled Allied forces by eagerly seeking the ultimate sacrifice for their cause. Giving one's life in the line of duty was one thing, but purposefully committing suicide to further Japanese goals was entirely different.

After over five years of fighting to that point, Allied leaders were not overly excited about continuing the long and bloody campaign. As the fighting evolved, it became more apparent the Japanese will to fight was strong, if not unwavering, and an invasion of the mainland might be necessary. President Roosevelt wanted to end the war

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<sup>12</sup> Biddle, 268.

<sup>13</sup> Gentile, 82.

quickly and with as few US and other Allied casualties as possible, but he and his advisors were sensing this may be more difficult than expected.

LeMay offered the President an option that seemed to fit. Intelligence reports showed that the Japanese constructed their cities mainly of wood and paper, which would be extremely susceptible to incendiary munitions. He felt that firebombing the Japanese mainland would bring the enemy to its knees soonest. Roosevelt signed off on the plan, while also considering the atomic bomb as another option. Revenge or xenophobia was part of the decision as well, but regardless, the result of the Pacific bombing campaign was approximately 780,000 combatant casualties. There were approximately 806,000 civilian casualties, of which the attacks killed some 330,000.<sup>14</sup> While the death toll was immense, so too was the depletion of the country's military arms. Allied air forces had destroyed the majority of the Japanese navy and merchant fleet and almost all its airpower as well. The Allied attacks severely depleted mainland military ability.

Some argue it was the threat of a Soviet invasion that pushed the Japanese to surrender. Others believe it was the anticipated Allied ground invasion. Still others cite the sheer terror and destruction of the atomic bombs at Nagasaki and Hiroshima that secured surrender. Pape argues that it was the naval blockade and its ability to disrupt the Japanese ability to equip and maneuver its forces that was the principal cause for Japanese surrender.<sup>15</sup> More likely, the cumulative effects of the naval blockade, the threat of Soviet invasion, the lack of mainland defense, the likely US ground invasion, and the terror of atomic weapons all had some role to play in the outcome. Japanese ability and will were at the lowest point since the initiation of hostilities. Allied will was about the same, but with full concentration now in the Pacific instead of dispersed throughout Europe, Africa, and the Far East; their ability was at its peak. The overall Allied capability level far surpassed that of the Japanese, leaving them with only a few options of which surrender was the best.

Like Germany, Japan had limited options from which to choose. First they could continue to fight, and given their recent track record against the Americans during the island hopping campaign, it appeared they could do so rather effectively. The Japanese

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<sup>14</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey Summary Report (USSBS) (Pacific War), Washington D.C., 1 July 1946, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Pape, 134.



had proved another of Clausewitz's beliefs that compared to the offensive, "...the superiority of the defensive...is very great, far greater than appears at first sight."<sup>16</sup> The Japanese exacted a horrific toll from the Allies as they defended the islands, but in the end, they were outnumbered and outmatched and were vanquished from the battlefields.

The Japanese manpower supply, a vital component of military ability, was a finite resource that was quickly waning. By choosing to continue to fight, a complete Japanese mobilization for their civilization's survival would most likely be required. Biddle points out that the level of Japanese morale would be immaterial as it was the citizens' loyalty to Emperor Hirohito that would drive them to work and fight as long as they physically could.<sup>17</sup>

The mainland fighting would be as fierce as it was in battles to capture Japanese islands. Japanese culture fit well with this idea. Many gladly chose death in support of their beliefs rather than life in shame as evidenced by the unprecedented Kamikaze missions. The fear, however, was that, despite all her efforts, the Japanese death toll and damage to the mainland would be immense, and the Allies, with their seemingly unlimited resource pool and determined coalition, would be victorious regardless. Allied military ability was high and was growing. Japan feared the Allies would destroy its people, land, and future. Her effort would be all for naught.

The second option Japan had available was to negotiate with the Allies. The same problems that affected the Germans plagued the Japanese. Differences in goals and objectives kept serious negotiations from becoming reality. At its most basic level, the Allies, specifically the United States, wanted unconditional surrender if not annihilation of the Japanese, while the Japanese wanted the absence of western influence and ultimately, survival. With diametrically opposed objectives, there was little room for bargaining, a similar situation as in the European theater. Also, Japan's position was too weak to bring much to the negotiating table. She attempted compromise with little to offer the other side as she was no longer in a position of strength. If peace was a primary objective for Japan, the time to negotiate would have been when she still had a fair amount of credible means to back up any threats. Again, the paradoxical condition of

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<sup>16</sup> Clausewitz, 84.

<sup>17</sup> Biddle, 278.

having the strength to coerce one's enemy occurs at the same time one's position of negotiation is the strongest. As time elapses, either the desire or the ability to negotiate effectively decreases and subsequently, so does the chance for peace.

In his essay, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," I. William Zartman introduces the idea of a Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS). He says the MHS is, "...based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both...they seek an alternative policy or way out."<sup>18</sup> The key to an MHS is that it is mutual and not merely agonizing for only one side. In the summer of 1945, unlike in 1918, the pain was not as mutual as it needed to be to cause both the sides to seek another way out.

The Allies felt they could escalate the conflict as required to achieve victory, although they hoped it would not be necessary. The Japanese, on the other hand, were in a much more troublesome situation. While Japan was not militarily bankrupt, it was no longer at its peak strength and diminishing rapidly. The existence of an approximately two and a half million man Japanese army in Manchuria and China was a point of contention that caused the Allies concern, but because of its distance and time to respond to Allied aggression, became a moot point.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the United States was able to strike the mainland directly, and the Japanese compounded their fear of ultimate defeat by their inability to resist. The MHS was anything but mutual. As their ability steadily decreased, their will seemed to follow.

The third Japanese option was that of surrender. To many diplomats and military leaders, surrendering was antithetical. Their pride, dignity, and culture would never allow such a tragedy to occur. They wanted nothing more than to continue fighting to the last man. Others, however, saw the futility in wasting life, land, and the chance at rebirth in the future to preserve pride. It was no doubt an arduous decision but one that kept Japan from complete annihilation and maintained some semblance of the population and its homeland. Surrendering preserved what little was left of Japan at that point.

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<sup>18</sup> I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments," eds. John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty, *Contemporary Peacemaking: Conflict, Violence, and Peace Processes* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd, 2003), 19.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald H. Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (New York, NY: Random House), 26.

The Allies complicated matters by insisting on unconditional surrender. Conscious anger from Pearl Harbor still existed four years later. Unconditional surrender was an emotional appeal to the US citizens demanding retribution, but it was also responsible for limiting options and the ability to manipulate incentives. A.C. Grayling states, “the Allied determination to have nothing but unconditional surrender was one factor in ensuring that seven more months of bitter fighting remained; demanding unconditional surrender leaves defenders with a sense of nothing to lose...”<sup>20</sup> The difficulty in securing an unconditional surrender manifested itself in a lengthened timeline, because there was even less of Schelling’s bargaining room.<sup>21</sup> Though it appealed to the Allies’ emotional state and provided a sense of accomplishment and reprisal for Japanese atrocities, it was nothing more than a label.

On the surface, unconditional surrender appears as a non-negotiable, complete subjugation agreement. In the case of Japan, demand for unconditional surrender was as much an emotional response to Pearl Harbor as it was a political and military desire. The notion of “unconditional” meant no compromise through Allied eyes. It became a sort of unifying battle cry, especially for the United States; a way to exact the long overdue revenge for a dishonorable, underhanded Japanese attack. The reality of the surrender, however, proved to be more conditional than the Allies hoped.

Even in the Japanese unconditional surrender, negotiations were prominent. For example, both sides, not just the one surrendering, must officially cease hostilities. While this may seem obvious, it is a stipulation with which the victor must comply. International and domestic public opinions matter, and if aggressive behavior continued from the victor, it would impact the legitimacy of the agreement. In the case of Japan, the Allies did not continue bombing or planning a ground invasion once the agreement was made. Surely, feelings of animosity on both sides remained, but they were at least suppressed.

Another condition in the unconditional surrender was the level of required Japanese demilitarization. Complete dismantling of their military was unacceptable, and

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<sup>20</sup> Grayling, 69.

<sup>21</sup> The more diametrically opposed adversaries’ objectives and goals are the less negotiation room is available between sides. Even a small willingness to sacrifice even a minute portion of one’s desired end state provides some bargaining room. Without it, the discussion could very well end before it ever really starts.

as a result, the Allies allowed them to retain a small self defense force for protection purposes only. It provided a level of stability in the region without risking a repeat of German events during the interwar period when they violated the Treaty of Versailles.

Another condition the Japanese questioned was the amount of war reparations they were required to pay. Clearly, there was no financially feasible way for them to compensate every member of the Allied coalition for incurred damages. Estimated reparations were plainly an unrealistic amount and so only accounted for a percentage of the total. The agreement had to be somewhat reasonable or neither side could accept the settlement. In fact, if the agreement was overly ambitious and unacceptable to the Japanese, they may have chosen to continue fighting as the lesser of two evils. The possible annihilation that could ensue might leave few Japanese military remaining to actually surrender to the Allies.

Perhaps the most significant condition of the surrender was that Emperor Hirohito was allowed to remain as the head of Japan. In fact, MacArthur considered him the occupation forces' best ally in reconstructing Japan and must remain in place.<sup>22</sup> A radio broadcast the day after the second atomic bomb was dropped voiced Japan's willingness to accept the Allied terms for surrender, "...provided that the said declaration does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as a Sovereign Ruler."<sup>23</sup>

The mere fact that it is an agreement, that the surrendering side must choose, means there is essentially some room for negotiation. It simply is not as easy as one country meeting the other's demands. Much more is involved and both parties must be willing to give somewhat. Granted, the victor will have more say in the conditions, but they must be amenable in some degree to the vanquished. If conditions are not somewhat reasonable, the vanquished may choose to delay the surrender, continue fighting, and inevitably cost both more blood and treasure, an undesirable outcome for all involved.

The Allies did not want to fight a long, drawn-out battle on the mainland of Japan. They knew it would be a costly endeavor. While the Allies pushed an agenda of total war and complete subjugation, they knew if taken, that road would hurt the Allied objectives

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<sup>22</sup> John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.), 323.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Spector, 3.

in the long run. The modifier chosen to attach to surrender was more bravado and rhetoric than anything else. “Unconditional” carried with it the idea that the enemy had absolutely no voice in the matter and were merely subjugated people forced to accept whatever surrender provisions presented. It, no doubt, had an emotive role in coalescing the Allies and their people.

Surrender conditions that appeared not to take into account the enemy’s well-being alleviated Allied desires for justice. In reality, much like the amount of reparations Japan was required to pay, the surrender conditions needed to be somewhat reasonable. They could and probably should lean in favor of the Allies as the victors. The goal was for the Japanese to choose the surrender option and end the war. A truly unconditional surrender would not support that political objective nor would the Japanese have chosen such an option. Not truly an unconditional surrender, negotiations resulted in the eventual settlement consisting of three policy documents: Potsdam Proclamation, Initial Post-surrender Policy, and secret Joint Chiefs of Staff directive. While these declarations contained sweeping land reforms and industrial reorganization to democratization and demilitarization to the creation of an entirely new constitution, Japanese considerations were paramount in their formation.<sup>24</sup>

### **Conventional War and Surrender**

The German and Japanese cases described above present a good foundation to examine surrender in conventional warfare. Both were nation-states, and both conflicts ended with one side choosing to cease fighting and surrender. Also, they both still had the means to resist further. Had they offered further resistance, it would have only meant a longer timeframe with more blood and treasure lost for both countries. By choosing to continue the war, each would have merely been delaying their inevitable, utter defeat. Just prior to their surrender, Germany and Japan’s military ability were in a severely weakened state and to rely on them to grab victory from the clutches of defeat would have been fool-hardy.

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<sup>24</sup> Dower, 73-77. Dower details the three documents in his book, but I’m emphasizing the role negotiations played in their development with the understanding that lasting peace was an overarching goal. Conditions that the American public might deem as truly unconditional would most likely not sit well with the Japanese and only delay an inevitable resurgence of violence later.

In each of the theaters, pockets of forces were engaged in asymmetric warfare, but the core fighting was openly waged armed conflict between regular military forces. There was rarely a doubt as to who was doing the fighting in a particular battle and the tactics were seldom ones bred from surreptitious sabotage and deception. Both Germany and Japan risked complete subjugation, annihilation, and occupation in the end. The overt nature of conventional war where adversaries know each other and dialogue between heads of state is present permits protagonists to discuss and choose termination options above more easily.

Each side is aware of who the opposition leaders and decision makers are and are able to more easily engage in recognized diplomatic negotiations. They are also able to better develop personal relationships, no matter how slight, that can be the difference in negotiation failure or success. In conventional war, however, the existential threat involved helps sustain a sufficient level of will for all sides involved. They are concerned with survival and, thus, will tend to cancel each other out. The level of ability drives the amount of capability in conventional war. Ultimately, it comes down to massing force and power with the intent to severely degrade, if not destroy, the enemy's ability to wage war, and in so doing coerce them into choosing surrender over total destruction and possible extinction.

The Allies militarily crushed the Germans and the Japanese, leaving them with few options. Their ability to effectively wage war was depleted. Their will to fight successfully was diminished but only in light of a weakened military ability. With both ability and will at diminutive states, each had an overall low capability level. More importantly, they had relatively lower capability levels than their enemy. The Allies however had increasing ability levels as the United States reached full mobilization. They also experienced increased will levels as their successes mounted. Both resulted in an overall high capability level that continued to rise as the war carried on.

What really matters is the comparison of capability level between opponents. Both can have minimal levels in both ability and will that would be disastrous if they opted for war with any other actor. If that level, however, is even marginally higher than that of the anticipated enemy, it is less problematic. Relative difference is key and when that difference is high, attractive choices are reduced. The options available to Germany

and Japan were almost just alternatives in name only. Of those only one really provided a course of action that would actually work while still preserving the remainder of their populace, land, and some acceptable semblance of their way of life. In unconventional warfare, however, things are not as black and white.

## Chapter 3

### Unconventional War

*Since the military art is simply and completely one of action, it is only when we have identified the enemy that the apparently complex problems posed to the army by modern warfare can be reduced to realistic proportions and easily resolved. The criteria for arriving at such a point will be difficult to establish....*

*-- Roger Trinquier, former French Army Officer and COIN practitioner*

*It is accepted that the final stake of modern warfare is the control of the populace. The army should therefore make its main effort in those areas where the population is the densest; that is, in the cities.*

*-- Roger Trinquier*

### Background

War is a violent contest of wills in which opponents attempt to compel one another to do their bidding. On one end of the spectrum of war is conventional conflict in which regular forces of two or more states openly wage war. On the other end is unconventional war in which indigenous military or paramilitary forces engage in covert, subversive, guerilla tactics, not necessarily aimed at their enemy's military forces and capabilities. This scale of war consists of two extremities made up of several diametrically opposed elements. In both cases decisions to begin, continue, and end war are still necessary, but the factors leading to those decisions constitute the distinction and are the focus of this chapter. On one hand, choosing to quit fighting would appear to be the same no matter the type of war, while on the other, the differences in conventional and unconventional war envisage key disparities crucial to full appreciation of the concept.

Several questions arise and are pertinent to the discussion: 1) What are the conditions that persuade an insurgent to surrender? 2) Why would an insurgent want to choose surrender? However, before one delves into discovering the answers to those questions, one should first explore the reasons an actor turns to insurgency and what it is they hope to gain through it. Understanding the genesis of a specific insurgency has great value, but one gains much through a general examination as well.



This chapter will examine research surrounding the causes of insurgency and some common ways adversaries conduct this form of war. It then compares the attributes of a nation-state against those of an insurgent group. The causes and methods of insurgency create a working background upon which to closely study the French-Algerian War (1954-1962). As an exemplar for unconventional war, the case illuminates the key differences between it and the conventional case studies of Chapter 2 as they pertain to military ability and political will. The section concludes by highlighting those disparities and outlining the role ability and will play in surrender in unconventional war.

### **Understanding Unconventional War**

As previously discussed, an insurgency is a group of indigenous people who partake in whatever violent and nonviolent means available to them to change the economic, political, and/or social status quo in which they live. Their means are subversive, clandestine, guerilla operations in order to leverage an asymmetric advantage in force. Analysts should not amalgamate insurgents with terrorists, though insurgencies often employ terror tactics.

Bruce Hoffman tackles the job of defining the terms “insurgent” and “terrorist” in his book, *Inside Terrorism*, and points out several nuanced differences. He says, “Terrorists...do not function in the open as armed units, generally do not attempt to seize or hold territory, deliberately avoid engaging enemy military forces in combat, are constrained both numerically and logistically from undertaking concerted mass political mobilization efforts, and exercise no direct control or governance over a populace at either the local or national level.”<sup>1</sup>

Many analysts obscure the issue because an insurgent group *may* employ terrorist activity, *may* operate clandestinely, or *may* avoid confrontation with enemy military units. By defining what activities and decisions constitute a terrorist group, Hoffman implies that the contrary equates to insurgents, providing a bit of overlap between the two concepts. The main point he makes is that while their goals may be consistent with one another, their methods and organizations differ. A noted French Army veteran and counterinsurgent (COIN) specialist highlights the interplay between the two, saying,

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press), 35.

“...victory in *modern warfare* [lies in]...the unconditional support of a population...If it doesn’t exist, it must be secured by every possible means, the most effective of which is *terrorism* [emphasis in original].”<sup>2</sup> Terrorism when used in the furtherance of an insurgency’s goals is just another method by which they hope to achieve those goals. The key distinction is that violence is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

In order to better understand the end state of an insurgency and those that act within, one should examine more closely the reasons they begin. Historians, social scientists, and other field experts have done much research and thinking, all attempting to decipher the rationale of insurgencies. The collection of ideas is sizeable but six concepts stand out as the most common.

Ted Robert Gurr proffers the first notion, relative deprivation, in his book *Why Men Rebel*. The phenomenon is based on what a people have compared to what they should have. Gurr calls it the tension between the “is” and the “ought.”<sup>3</sup> His belief is that expectations and capabilities go hand in hand and it is the tension between the two that gets at the heart of why men rebel. He describes three main categories of relative deprivation: decremental, aspirational, and progressive.

Decremental deprivation occurs when expectations of what reality should be remain about the same, yet the situation deteriorates.<sup>4</sup> In other words, peoples’ capabilities decline while their expectations remain the same. The populace has little reason to believe that they can or should be able to achieve more, but the conditions around them continue to worsen. Poor governance, natural disasters, and civil war are a few examples of causes.

Aspirational deprivation, however, is just the opposite. The situation remains consistent while the expectations of the people increase.<sup>5</sup> In this case, people find that conditions in their life do not change when expectation is for improvement. When a group intervenes promising to improve circumstances and puts mechanisms in place to do so, people’s expectations increase. Friction and hostilities result as time passes and the people do not realize their expectations.

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<sup>2</sup> Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 24, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Gurr, 46.

<sup>5</sup> Gurr, 46.

The last category Gurr discusses is a combination of the negative aspects of the decremental and aspirational ideas. Progressive deprivation occurs when expectations increase and the situation, instead of remaining constant as in the aspirational type, degenerates further.<sup>6</sup> It is the worst of both worlds and a catalyst for insurgency.

The second common cause fueling insurgents is violation of rights. Often a tyrannical regime runs a country, opting for solutions to many problems centering on a violence of its own. The wanton killing of civilians and blatant disregard for human rights creates palpable angst driving people to push for changes. Genocide, ethnic cleansing, and mass killings are indications of human rights violations. These violations also garner the attention of the international community and, thus, give more credence to the insurgent's motives. Insurgents exploit those who are enshrouded in hopelessness and see no foreseeable way out other than violence as the means to achieve desired changes.

Disenfranchisement frequently is a source of insurgency. This third common cause removes people's diplomatic recourse and limits their ability to find solutions with nonviolent means. At a minimum, people's expectations of their government include the ability to provide its citizens with security and basic services. When the people fear their government more than others and when they have no recognized voice in that government to protest the atrocities and seek remedies, a critical situation ripe for insurgency materializes. A lack of voice in one's government weakens its legitimacy in the people's eyes. The state of affairs worsens, however, when that government fails to provide the basic services required to live at the expected standard of living. It is not unusual for people to find themselves living in abject poverty while their government's heads enjoy the lap of luxury often at their expense. Often, the disparity intensifies an already volatile situation.

The inability to fight conventionally after a catastrophic defeat is a fourth source of insurgent motivation. This situation involves two relatively equal parties within a territory embroiled in conflict. The struggle is fierce and one side fights to exhaustion, depleting its means to continue a military struggle. The subdued actor still has the will to resist but lacks the military ability to do so conventionally. The lower ability, however,

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<sup>6</sup> Gurr, 46.

only pertains to conventional methods and by shifting focus to unconventional ones; the group can maintain a higher capability level. Such a strategic and tactical modification is not easy to achieve, but in some cases proves the difference in success and failure.

A fifth underlying driver for insurgencies is ideology. The ideological spectrum is broad, encompassing a myriad of beliefs from religion to politics to economics. Religion tends to spring to mind, however, when the word ideology is mentioned, and it is arguably the most recurrent theme. It would be too simplistic to state that religion is the reason some insurgents rise up, that they fight in the name of religion. It is a much more complex dynamic, but Islamic fundamentalism provides a useful example. Many observers believe the philosophy and writings of Sayyid Qutb are the foundation of numerous Islamic movements. His work, *Ma'alim fi-l-Tariq* (Milestones) outlines the principles for which Muslims should strive. He advocated a strict following of the Koran, namely the liberation of men from other men to serve only the one true God. He felt that government intended to fill the role of the highest power, acting as judge and ruler of other men, a right which belonged only to God. It was then the duty of Muslims to do what they must to correct this wrong.<sup>7</sup>

Mao's War of the People is another example of ideology spurring violent insurgency. His communist ideals were at odds with those of the Western-backed Chiang Kai-shek. Mao's goal was to unite the people of China under communism and doing so required violent measures as evidenced by his assertion that, "every communist must grasp the truth that 'political power grows out of the barrel of a [Communist] gun.'"<sup>8</sup> While Mao's statement is telling, it is generally indicative of a small subset of the people. Ideological differences tend to drive only the most fundamentalist believers to violence. Most of the remaining believers are unhappy with the disparity but stop short of physical aggression. Many times ideology simply becomes a convenient catch-all that recruits a broader support base. Regardless, it has the potential to invigorate would be spectators into violent insurgents.

Ideology can act as a great mobilization tool, spurring action from generally peaceful groups. Typically, the greater the ideological differences, the more effective the

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<sup>7</sup> Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (USA: SIME journal – <http://majalla.org>), 57.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington, KY), 201.

ability to gain support. If only nuances differentiate one ideology from another, adamant individual backing is not as prominent as if there were numerous, stark differences between the two. To be an effective impetus for insurgency ideology usually requires a vocal leader or group of leaders well versed in public speaking and propaganda usage. Ideological distinctions tend only to get a foot in the door of insurgency by creating interest in the cause. Charismatic leaders, however, can cultivate that initial awareness into intense desire to achieve change and rectify deficient situations.

David Kilcullen, a top level counterinsurgency advisor, neatly sums up the sixth source of insurgents through his idea of the “accidental guerilla.” He describes it as the concept of mistakenly creating insurgents from initial nonparticipants by committing overly aggressive acts whose unintended and unexpected effects drive the nonaligned into the arms of insurgency.<sup>9</sup> Kilcullen describes a four stage cycle consisting of infection, contagion, intervention, and rejection, drawing pathological similarities in both name and function.

A group moving into a remote, ungoverned, conflict laden area to establish a presence characterizes the infection phase. They prey on the area’s already compromised situation and exploit the impending breakdown. Having established a relative safe haven in the area, the group then spreads violence and its ideology to other areas in the contagion stage.

Globalization and media are two great insurgent advantages during the contagion phase that facilitate national and international attention. Once awareness of the situation gains momentum and becomes greater than local awareness, it attracts interest from other global players.

The cycle then enters the intervention stage. External players taking action to counter the group’s presence characterizes this phase. Foreign involvement is not necessarily kinetic. It may begin with humanitarian aid, infrastructure development, educational efforts, and other seemingly peaceful endeavors. Kilcullen believes this peaceful intercession period is short lived as insurgents usually react violently to foreign

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<sup>9</sup> David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 34.

presence.<sup>10</sup> Insurgents use heightened security to ensure continued assistance and violent means are an inherent part of that security. He asserts that, "...a high profile, violent, or foreign-based intervention tends to increase the support for the [insurgents]...who can paint themselves as defenders of local people against external influence."<sup>11</sup> The violence and foreign "occupation" coalesces the locals and the insurgents against their enemy.

The next stage, rejection, is the defining one in that it is when "accidental guerillas" emerge. The unity of locals and insurgents gained in the previous stage is put into action to overtly oppose the foreign presence. The loose coalition of people unites in their common feelings resulting from invasion and occupation more than from ideology and beliefs; feelings insurgent leaders adroitly manipulated. Action is predominant in this phase, and if not carefully managed by the government, the intervening force will become the enemy instead of the helping hand. That force may then end up fighting the entire local society, those it was originally there to help.<sup>12</sup>

The previous six sources of insurgency are by no means a comprehensive list. The ones mentioned above are the most common theories in current research. The fact that there are many reasons and no single one was ever the sole basis for an insurgency, however, highlights an interesting point. Any combination of reasons, their effects on the people, and the responses of the government most likely all contribute to the rise of an insurgency. As an example, a government that rules with an iron fist where human rights violations abound is indicative of the nascent stages of statehood. As time passes, however, the government's violence may subside; replaced by ardent political disenfranchisement. The lack of voice may be the impetus for different views of governmental structure. The combination of all or any of these three issues has the potential of inciting an active and violent insurgency. Pinning all blame on one cause or attributing all action to a solitary motive would be too simplistic and even dangerous. Holistic interpretation of the context provides a better understanding of insurgencies and a more solid foundation from which to examine the means insurgents use to alleviate those root causes. Understanding the reasons and motivation behind insurgent groups,

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<sup>10</sup> Kilcullen, 37.

<sup>11</sup> Kilcullen, 37.

<sup>12</sup> Kilcullen, 38.

however, is only part of the grasping unconventional war. How their motivations manifest themselves on the battlefield is equally important.

In understanding insurgency, discontent is rarely sufficient by itself as a catalyst. Unfortunately, there are many who are less than happy with their government, level of disenfranchisement, or other negative aspect of their lives. The concern in this work is limited to those that take action to alter their distressing situation. Several different avenues are available as outlets for those desiring a change. Kilcullen's précis of those methods falls into the following four concise categories: provocation, intimidation, protraction, and exhaustion. He believes that these four tactics are, "...standard for any insurgent movement..." and thus their consideration is essential to achieve deeper insight.<sup>13</sup>

Kilcullen's idea of provocation centers on insurgent activity designed to evoke a reaction or, better, an overreaction from their opponents. The hope of this method is that authorities' responses take repressive form and alienate the populace and cause internal strife and instability. The attack on the World Trade Centers in New York in 2001 is a good example of such a method. While a terrorist group conducted the attack, many believe they attacked to provoke the United States into military action in the Middle East to unite Muslims there against the West. Whatever the reason for the attack it succeeded in triggering a significant reaction from the US that arguably played directly into the hands of its prosecutors.

Intimidation is another tactic insurgents employ with widespread success. They use it to affect behaviors of the populace, government, and police officials, as well as less committed members of the insurgency itself. The aggressors use threats and force to coerce these people to remain faithful to the insurgency, discourage them from interfering, and deter them from cooperating with the enemy.

Insurgents will often publicly kill those that cooperate with the government and as a further deterrent will kill some if not all of their family members. They do not confine intimidation to those directly supporting or cooperating with the government. It is not uncommon for insurgent to strike out at the other entities backing the government from afar, such as countries or organizations belonging to a supporting coalition. The Taliban

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<sup>13</sup> Kilcullen, 30.

bombing of the Indian Embassy in Afghanistan is just one example. Their intent was to target Indian diplomatic and development personnel to impede progress and delegitimize the government through intimidation.<sup>14</sup>

Funding, materiel, and manpower are just a few of the items adversaries expend in conflict. Insurgents hope to extend the conflict as long as possible in an attempt to attrite those resources using another tactic Kilcullen labels protraction. Mao illustrated the attributes of a protracted war in his treatise “On Protracted War.” A larger, conventional opponent requires a much larger and more robust supply chain to keep it moving. By protracting a conflict, costs become a prohibitive factor that insurgents hope cause their enemy to yield. By fighting clandestinely and in more maneuverable groups than a typical conventional force, they are able to meet the enemy on their own terms. Mao’s forces at the point of attack, though, are relatively larger than the portion of the enemy’s force, giving Mao a relative advantage.<sup>15</sup> They ensured that the force they were to encounter was not superior and moved tactically to take advantage of surprise and mass at critical points against their enemy. Insurgents quickly disappear into the geographic or human terrain and blend well in both, putting the onus on the enemy to hunt them, sort them, and engage them again. Their ability to disengage, disappear, and reengage all at their choosing with few exceptions helps them survive for long periods of time and subsequently prolongs the campaign. Mao advocates that many such engagements, “...change the original pattern of strength...in the course of war.”<sup>16</sup>

Kilcullen’s fourth insurgent tactic is exhaustion. It is similar to protraction except the focus is on the costs not on the ability of the insurgents to keep the unconventional war going. True, part of protraction’s appeal is the effect costs have on the nation state, but its mainstay is the insurgent’s aptitude for survival. On the other hand, exhaustion’s goals are to alter the cost/benefit ratio in favor of the insurgent by exacting prohibitive expenditures and/or lowering expected benefits. Exhaustion strikes at the opponent’s desire to continue the fight by disrupting the opponent government and support system, tiring its troops and, and, ultimately, eroding political will. Insurgents employing a strategy of exhaustion adopt methods that impose increased time, finance, and

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<sup>14</sup> Kilcullen, 31.

<sup>15</sup> Mao Tse-tung, “On Protracted War,” 233-5.

<sup>16</sup> Mao, 235.



inconvenience on the enemy. If insurgents can deteriorate the public support for opposing government's actions by causing large, unpopular expenses in both blood and treasure, exhaustion can prove successful.<sup>17</sup>

Terrorism is another tactic that can be useful in each of Kilcullen's insurgent methods. Analysts often neglect or place in the terrorism category anyone who uses terror tactics. Simply because one labels another a terrorist does not mean they cannot label said terrorist as an insurgent. The truth is that the lines between the two are blurry at best and may not exist at all. It is common, though, to consider the two as mutually exclusive but terrorism can be a useful insurgent tool within each of the tactics Kilcullen describes. By committing seemingly random acts of violence and instigating an overreaction from the government, terrorism can play a significant role in provocation. Similarly, extreme acts of bloodshed enhance the tactic of intimidation. The threat may simply not be enough; action often speaks louder than words in intimidation. Although commonly considered a terrorist act, remotely detonating bombs and other explosive devices perpetuates the insurgency without needlessly exposing the actors. Its ability to avoid some level of risk while facilitating the spread of fear and insecurity makes terrorism a viable means to achieve protraction as well as exhaustion. Insurgents can achieve it inexpensively, yet exact a significant toll on the target government.

The most complex puzzle occurs when facing suicide terror tactics. To the traditional westerner, it seems to be a difficult concept to grasp. While the act in itself is perplexing, finding the solution to stop it is even more frustrating. Established coercive methods seek to increase costs or decrease benefits to amounts that alter the targeted group's cost/benefit ratio to an unacceptable point. Often in war this involves force and violence. Pain is directly tied to the actions (or inactions) of the targeted group and will usually stop once those actions stop.

Dealing with suicide terror, however, changes the calculations. A group willing to purposely sacrifice their lives for the cause may not respond to usual coercive methods designed to alter cost/benefit ratios. One should not confuse a suicide bomber's willingness to die with the sacrifice that military members agree to make in the line of duty if necessary. While both soldiers and suicide terrorists are willing to die for their

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<sup>17</sup> Kilcullen, 32.

respective causes, the latter do so actively and on purpose. The mission of a suicide terrorist is about their death and if they live, their sponsors often consider the action a failure. A soldier's mission, on the other hand, is not to die but to survive while achieving their military objective. If the soldier perishes in the mission, planners often considered it a failure, at some level at least. The object of one's own death in suicide terror raises a question that vexes even the most ardent COIN operator: How does one alter the cost/benefit ratio of suicide terror to make it unappealing to its perpetrator?

It is extremely difficult to increase the cost the terrorist must incur when they are already planning on self sacrifice. The flip side of the coin involves ways to decrease the benefits of suicide operations to the organization or the remaining family. Both methods seem daunting at best. Another way of looking at the same dilemma that may be easier to achieve would be raising the expected benefits of *ceasing* suicide operations. Suicide terror presents a difficult set of conditions to counter, making it an effective insurgency tool.

Provocation, intimidation, protraction, exhaustion, and terrorism are all viable approaches insurgents have at their disposal. Used separately, they are only somewhat effective, but when used in conjunction with one another can be the death knell for a floundering government. A coherent strategy able to adapt to changing situations and focus efforts against the most appropriate aspects of the opposing government at the correct times will be more successful. Conducting an insurgency, however, is not as easy as just organizing angry partisans. It requires a high level of dedication, determination, and effort. The road ahead is generally a long and arduous one that has the potential to wear out even the most resilient of insurgents. Political will becomes the life blood of the movement and policy makers may need to focus an even higher level of dedication, determination, and effort to bolster the insurgent's waning conviction. Without the political will to sustain and fuel the tactics and activities, the insurgency may end up being an exercise in futility.

At this juncture, a brief comparison of conventional and unconventional war is necessary to lay some groundwork for how those differences affect surrender. Conventional war pits two or more nation states against one another, while a nation state on one side and an insurgent group on the other wage unconventional war. Beyond just

the participants lie several drastic disparities. Size, international relationships, and motivations are three that play directly into the methods each are able to use effectively in starting, continuing, and ending war.

The size of a nation state and that of an insurgent is not simply the amount of land mass each claims legitimately or holds influence over. Geographic references just scratch the surface of size within an insurgency. Typically, an insurgent force is numerically smaller. Their method of fighting allows them to remain active with a fewer number of people. Also, active participation is not a requirement, often requiring little more than sympathetic inaction. As long as there is little resistance from the majority of the population, insurgents can move among them undetected and within a sanctuary. Nation states, on the other hand, are responsible for more security than just the local area where an insurgency may be sprouting. As a result, they need more members. More responsibility and members subsequently means a larger and longer logistics train. Nation states tend to have a greater amount of funds with which to fight, while insurgencies often run their operations on a shoestring budget. The level of funding required to support an insurgency is lower than that to support effective COIN operations of even an average sized nation state.

International relationships present another set of differences between insurgents and nation states. Insurgents have only a small role initially on the international stage. Few cases exist where an insurgent group maintained a dominant voice in established international regimes. Often, however, by calling global attention to the situation, insurgents can use nation states power against them. Nation states are fairly sensitive to international pressure and at times feel compelled by it to do things they may not otherwise do. Insurgents able to deftly manipulate the media and highlight any violence by the nation state are at a definite advantage.

If, however, the insurgency gains little ground in the worldwide arena, that same coalition is a source of power for the nation state. They are able to call upon like-minded nation states and groups for moral, financial, and materiel support. The pool from which to draw resources can be exponentially increased and present a severe impediment to the insurgent. Once international actors respond to the distress call, though, all the rules and stipulations by which they all must abide take center stage.

Laws such as the Geneva Conventions, the Law of Armed Conflict, and Rules of Engagement (ROE) rarely constrain insurgent activities. They are able to take whatever measures they deem necessary to achieve their objectives. When fighting an unconventional war against those who can use unrestrained action, the playing field becomes uneven. The regulations wreak havoc on nations that must adhere to them. If two groups are warring and one has unlimited means at its disposal while the other is bound by ROEs, laws, and agreements, the latter will be disadvantaged.

For example, actor A may decide to take cover among civilians and use them as human shields with no regard for their lives. International law, on the other hand, often binds Actor B to spare civilians to the best of its ability. The law often means actor B is unable to fire until fired upon, granting the initiative to the enemy.

Being an official signatory to agreements is not required, however, to achieve greater levels of battlefield parity. As a group gains international clout and recognition, regardless of their signatory status, the international community (IC) will generally hold them to a higher standard. The IC may expect the group to abide by international agreements even though they are not signatories. International pressure on the group to conform or be relegated to a lower tier world status can often provide enough reason to follow suit.

Though gaining international recognition has pitfalls for insurgencies, typically, the greater the global publicity, the better the situation in the long run. By shedding more light on the state of affairs, insurgents can spread their message to a larger audience and gain even more support. The ability of the government to conceal state atrocities becomes much tougher as well. The intervention that worldwide attention spurs usually manifests via international regimes and bureaucracy, both of which can hamper decision making and encumber swift action. Effective COIN operations depend on the ability to adapt and act quickly, and as the number of participants increase, processes become counterproductive. While global relationships set insurgents and nation states apart, it pales in comparison to the disparity motivation presents.

One can sum up the incentives that compel a nation state and insurgent to fight as either avarice or injustice. In their article, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War,” Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler investigate the causes of civil war. While there are differences

between civil war and insurgency, the authors' conclusion that, "...rebellion may be explained by atypically severe grievances... [or] atypical opportunities..." provides insight into why insurgencies begin.<sup>18</sup>

Greed is a powerful motivator and according to Collier and Hoeffler, has a stronger tie to rebellion than the grievances they investigated.<sup>19</sup> The hunger for greater power, more money, or larger influence can drive leaders to command a following under other pretenses. Greed and opportunity tend to benefit only a smaller number of individuals though, so the leader must bring more of the population into the fold to be effective. The organizer may use grievances to motivate followers, capitalizing on their efforts through artificial altruism.

As the insurgency continues and motivation diminishes, the odds begin to favor COIN operations if greed is the lone incentive. Greed and opportunity may provide reasons for initiation of hostilities, but grievances have the power to sustain them. Insurgents can align their cause with grievances and the opposing nation state's with greed, bringing morality and ethics to the forefront of the conflict.

Legitimacy of the cause, the leaders, and the actions are keys to successful insurgency. The driving force behind counterinsurgency is frequently maintaining the status quo. The government in charge hopes to quell the unrest and get on with "business as usual." Furthermore, they have to achieve ultimate success whereas an insurgency often just needs to keep from losing, a much simpler prospect.

The nation state must achieve a recognizable victory to demonstrate to the populace that it has things well in hand. It must defeat the insurgents, leaving neither ability or will remaining, which is no small task. The people could view any insurgent remnant as a failure on the government's part, lessening its legitimacy and ultimately playing into the hands of the insurgents. The attackers, on the other hand, especially if employing exhaustion as a tactic need simply to keep the embers of discontent lit among the population, maintain a presence there, and continue the information war that builds a greater following. As long as there is a sufficient level of insurgency, the people could consider the insurgency as successful.

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<sup>18</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56, 563.

<sup>19</sup> Collier and Hoeffler, 578.

The motivation to quit is more readily accessible to a nation state. Again, shifting cost/benefit ratios are at play here. At some point, the cost becomes too great to continue fighting, a point that can happen sooner to the government than to insurgents. Were an insurgency to be defeated, the best they could hope for would be the original situation that existed at the start of the conflict. They gain nothing by being defeated and therefore, will often fight to the bitter end. A nation state, however, has much to lose and more reason to yield with at least a little more ease. It is already in the position of advantage and by “winning” maintains that position. More is at stake for the nation and actions tend to reflect some level of risk aversion.

A nation state vs. nation state conflict differs greatly from that fought between an insurgent group and a nation state. Those differences may hold the answers to how best to conduct a successful counterinsurgency and ultimately achieve an insurgent surrender. An in depth look into the French-Algerian War from 1954-1962 will prove beneficial to that endeavor.

### **French-Algerian Case Study**

As an imperial power in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, France’s influence spread far and wide. The French flag flew in several parts of the world and it marked power and prestige to all who viewed it. Things began a turn for the worse, however, in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the dawn of The Great War. The trenches of WWI took a hefty toll on all but hit the French especially hard. Although the military survived the war, the psychological damage was insurmountable. France adopted a mental and physical strategy of defense and when Germany invaded France two decades later, they put up little resistance. Rather than endure the violence, death and destruction in a war with Germany, France chose to surrender quickly. Economic events ten years earlier also played a large part in France’s decision to forgo total commitment to WWII. The Great Depression wracked France financially, as it did to most other nations in the world during that time. The French economy needed time to recuperate and by 1939, it was a hard sell to spend what little resources available on a war that would drain even more life-blood from their coffers. The French were not prepared to fight and they had little will to do so either.

Their capability level was low from the start, so low they recognized the impending disaster should they choose to fight. What was left of France would be annihilated by a more powerful, capable and willing German enemy, an unacceptable situation in which to place themselves. The costs of war with Germany were too great compared to the costs of acquiescence. The benefits of choosing war were mostly intangible such as pride and honor which were not enough to outweigh the benefits of choosing surrender. Either way the French looked at the problem, the cost/benefit analysis led them to surrender.

War raged through Europe as the Axis and Allies punched and counterpunched with France playing the part of the boxing ring where the heavyweights fought. At the close of WWII, France was anxious to make the climb back toward the top as one of the premiere world powers. The empire they still held in Southeast Asia and North and West Africa were the cornerstones of that aspiration, specifically the colonies in Vietnam, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. The influence on Vietnam and Algeria was far greater than that on Morocco and Tunisia; the latter two were further along in their quest for independence from France. Vietnam, as the first bastion of French influence, and Algeria, as a French colony, were areas of great import, and often where foreign imposition is greatest, so is domestic resistance. France fought a rising nationalist movement in Vietnam in the late 40s to the early 50s, resulting in a French method of COIN and a premonition of what was to come in Algeria shortly thereafter. Vietnam, Morocco, and Tunisia were all central to the bloodshed that occurred in Algeria from 1954-1962. The violence did not begin in 1954, however. The French-Algerian War was long in the making.

French soldiers landed on the shores of Algeria in 1830 and four years later appropriated the North African country as a French colony.<sup>20</sup> By 1954 it had a population of nearly nine million. Of that about eight million were Muslim and the other one million were European settlers.<sup>21</sup> The French often referred to the latter as *colons* or *pied noir* for the black leather shoes the settlers wore. Colonial French rule envisioned an Algeria that was just a smaller France with all the same prestige and glamour, and the

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<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Stora, *Algeria 1830-2000: A Short Story* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 243.

<sup>21</sup> Stora, 26.

political heads felt the best way was to encourage European, and preferably French, settlement of the area.

The government offered land and political and occupational inducements to promote increased immigration. Land incentives were particularly problematic as the French often ripped land out from under Algerian Muslims and then gave it to the colons. Though the colon population amounted to only about ten percent of the total, they dominated the economy as a large majority of the government, professionals, and intellectuals that comprised the backbone of the country's ability to function. Their per capita income far surpassed that of the Algerian Muslims.

Colons also held an overpowering majority of the political voice. Few Muslims participated in the political process, and those that did comprised such a feeble portion that the colons overshadowed their views. The French exported Algerian resources to France proper to help post-war recovery and rebuild it into the shining beacon it was in the past. Industry in Algeria also revolved around the needs of the France. Taking from the North African colony to bolster the imperialist ruler was not uncommon. If the French paid fees for Algerian resources or services, they were nominal at most and added to the growing feelings of substandard native treatment. Many of the inequities would not have been possible except for colon cooperation. The *pied noir* were vital to France's plan to keep Algeria under colonial rule and use it to prop itself up domestically and internationally. To many native Algerians, it was fast becoming a hopeless situation.

The Muslim population was not homogenous in its feelings of oppression and subjugation. Many were pro-French and believed in the power of its colonial ruler to push Algeria to the economic forefront of African nations. Many more, however, began to see the writing on the wall. Treatment of Algerian Muslims and international events fanned the flames of revolution. Many natives, no doubt, asked themselves how they, as a simple, underdeveloped nation, could stand up to a colonial powerhouse such as France. Algeria was no match for her ruler economically, diplomatically, or militarily.

For years, Algerians saw France as the guiding light of power, wealth, strength, and authority, but that image was beginning to unravel. The German subjugation of France in WWII exposed a fatal flaw. Though they were ultimately victorious as a member of the Allied powers, France suffered a decrease in their international standing



after four years of German occupation. The mighty French appeared to be slipping backwards toward a second rate status. Another blow to their prestige occurred in Southeast Asia.

The first French-Indochina war saw France's grip on Vietnam slipping. It was a bloody contest of wills that ended in a climactic battle at Dien Bien Phu. There the French planned to make a stand and force the Vietnamese to come to them. The French reinforced their camp with concertina wire, observation positions, and ranged-in artillery positions. Their fortress, they hoped, would be impregnable and result in countless enemy casualties. The French artillery officers paid little credence to the Vietnamese ingenuity and dedication by dismissing counter-battery fire opportunities due to the unfavorable terrain.<sup>22</sup> The Vietnamese navigated the slopes and surprised the French outpost with accurate and deadly artillery. They slowly began to occupy key pieces of terrain and eventually were able to inhibit the aerial resupply of the base severing the main logistical artery. Eventually, the Vietnamese overwhelmed the French at Dien Bien Phu and though still possessing the ability to fight on suffered from a severe lack of political will to do so. Before the battle at Dien Bien Phu, the French populace began to lose interest in the faraway war in which many were losing their lives seemingly in exchange for very little reward. Public support continued to wane as the war progressed, finally reaching its nadir in 1954. The catastrophic results at Dien Bien Phu took their toll on France's status. In the eyes of many, an inferior, underdeveloped enemy defeated a major power.

Algerians began to see that, perhaps, the French mystique was merely a façade and that France should have no authority to rule over the North African colony when they were really no more than equals. Algerians only had to look left or right to see other nations already turning away from the French empire. By 1954, violence in both Morocco and Tunisia was skyrocketing as both sought freedom from French influence. Both nations eventually achieved independence just two years later.

The precedents set showed Algerian insurgents it was possible to achieve autonomy from France. The combination of growing Algerian grievances and French

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<sup>22</sup> Martin Windrow, *The Last Valley: Dien Bien Phu and the French Defeat in Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press), 291.

injustices, fractured French public support for its colonies, recent military defeats, and precedent setting in Morocco and Tunisia all laid the foundation for the violent insurgency that began on November 1, 1954. The bloodshed, however, would not have been possible without a collection of fervent groups and individuals focused on achieving their goals.

Since the day of the French invasion, Algeria hosted a litany of groups who desired change in the situation. Some movements were based more in rhetoric while others followed up with action. Although it is possible for political movements to use passive means, more often than not violence is the dominant action. On the eve of the war in 1954, two groups took center stage in the French-Algerian War: the *Mouvement Nationaliste Algerienne* (MNA) and the *Front de Liberation Nationale* (FLN). Both have their roots in another group that dissolved shortly after the conflict began, the *Parti du Peuple Algerien/Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertes Democratiques* (PPA-MTLD).

In fact, individuals from the PPA-MTLD conducted the events that marked the official start of hostilities on November 1, 1954. It was a large organization with broader regional goals that included demand for Algerian independence. Because it was more of a centralizing organization it played to the interests of the majority and in doing so lost some of its appeal to local Algerians. The old head of the PPA-MTLD, Messali Hadj, followed a more classical approach to political action involving strikes, petitions, and demonstrations.<sup>23</sup> Younger activists within the organization disagreed with a civil disobedience stance and clashed violently with Hadj. He broke away and founded the MNA in December 1954. Hadj had been, "...the impetus behind the first pro-independence organizations, [and] was still the true charismatic leader of the national Algerian movement."<sup>24</sup> Many respected him and his methods and beliefs did not rely solely on military action. Although capable of violence and indeed carrying out several notable plots to disrupt and disable French control, the insurgents designed their methods to affect real change through legitimate means when able. The young activists with whom Hadj disagreed had different ideas.

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<sup>23</sup> Stora, 36.

<sup>24</sup> Stora, 38.

The FLN made its debut in Algeria when it took credit for the November 1<sup>st</sup> attacks. Its main core consisted of younger, more violent activists who felt that achieving change through anything other than military force was dated, unproductive, and wasted precious time. The struggle in Algeria was over a century old, and it was time to use any and all means at their disposal to achieve their goals. Although history cites the FLN with starting the French-Algerian War in 1954, two important things should be considered. The first is that the insurgency, though not formally labeled, had been ongoing since the French invasion in 1830. Gradations of oppression were common throughout the colonial times of Algeria, and its citizens never fully supported French rule. Several different groups arose in opposition to French rule. On the surface, each movement appeared to be firmly on the same side of the fight; however, as supporters learned more about the organizations, political turmoil became commonplace. Smaller issues became larger ones that often divided groups internally and split them from other anti-French movements.

The disparity led to infighting and an overall disjointed French resistance, highlighting a second consideration. The FLN was just one of many groups and was desperately searching for its identity among the masses. Its goal was to be the one true representative of the Algerian people. They believed it was their charge to persuade those opposed to FLN views, beliefs, and methods to become supporters. In early 1955, tensions between the FLN and MNA reached dangerous levels.

As two groups who attempted to maintain a superior status level in the Algerian community to increase recruitment, the FLN and MNA engaged in what one could only deem an infantile squabble with antithetical ends. In a propaganda leaflet, the leader of the FLN in Algiers, Abbane Ramdane, insulted Messali Hadj denouncing him and his views. The written affront directed at the MNA's leader was the last straw. On December 10, 1955, members of the FLN executed Sadek Rihani, the MNA leader in Algiers and, subsequently set off a bloody chain of events.<sup>25</sup>

For seven years, the two organizations waged an intense battle exploiting all means to eliminate the other. Their struggle had nothing to do with the Algerian future. It was simply a power struggle to determine who would be the sole representative of their

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<sup>25</sup> Stora, 59.

beloved country. The ledger of violence is impressive when considered in the backdrop of an ongoing insurgency. In France nationalists were responsible for, "...more than twelve thousand assaults, four thousand deaths, and more than nine thousand injuries..." and, "in Algeria itself, the toll of that civil war was very heavy: six thousand dead and fourteen thousand wounded. In France and Algeria, the total number of FLN and MNA casualties was nearly ten thousand dead and twenty-five thousand wounded."<sup>26</sup>

In the end, the conflict benefited the French government more than the Algerian movement. Acute instances of extreme FLN violence drove some MNA members to join the French Army. It also took the lives of key personnel in the movement that later held vital positions in the Algerian government. The war within a war depleted trained fighters and kept focus from their ultimate objective. When the violence once again turned toward the French, however, the FLN was the sole remaining power for independence. The insurgents achieved some semblance of unity of purpose, although it would never encompass every Algerian.

A year later in 1956 after further restructuring, the FLN added the *Armee de Liberation Nationale* (ALN) and became the FLN-ALN, though still often referred to as simply the FLN. The label modification marked more than just a change in name; it represented an amended mentality where political action took primacy over military action. The FLN focused on the political and the ALN on the military aspects. The movement was maturing and looking toward an end state of an independent Algerian nation free from French rule and influence. France and its leaders, however, had other ideas.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, a litany of French leaders and their influence played parts in the war. The most significant were Francois Mitterand, General Raoul Salan, and General, later President, Charles de Gaulle. Views of how best to deal with the situation in Algeria mainly defined these leaders, and even their own opinions changed over time. The 4<sup>th</sup> Republic was in power at the beginning of the French-Algerian War with Mitterand as the Minister of the Interior. He was an ardent believer in Algeria as a part of France and felt that secession was unimaginable. Before the National Assembly in November 1954, Mitterand voiced his resolve by saying, "my policy will be

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<sup>26</sup> Stora, 59.

defined by these three words: will, steadfastness, presence.”<sup>27</sup> To him, maintaining French-Algeria was not only logical, as it had been French for nearly one hundred and thirty years, but also highly desired due to recent natural resource discoveries and plans for exploiting the Sahara for nuclear testing. Mitterand whole-heartedly considered the French superior to their Algerian-Muslim cohabitants. His words and actions followed suit, building the tension in the area.

On November 13, 1956, a larger than life figure entered the Algerian picture and proceeded to markedly alter its path. General Raoul Salan replaced General Henri Lorrillot as the commander in chief in Algeria. The latter was judged incompetent when it came to the handling of the guerilla war in which the French found themselves. Salan was a veteran of Indochina, an irregular war expert, and a firm believer in French exceptionalism.<sup>28</sup> His charge was to win the war, win it fast, and win it decisively. Salan wrestled the reigns of the situation from the politicians and employed his forces in mass saying, “...the army would accept nothing less than the total defeat of the ‘rebels’...”<sup>29</sup> While the majority of his methods were military at heart, he recognized the validity of using information as well. After a particularly bloody battle in May 1957, Salan dispatched aid to the area where the SAS officers were to, “...promote literacy and provide medical assistance, which also served as counterpropaganda and intelligence.”<sup>30</sup> He was making progress when the flavor of the environment in which he was operating changed. An undercurrent of FLN appeasement and consideration for Algerian self-determination and independence began to emerge. The idea of France ceding a part of its territories did not sit well with many, including Salan, and he intended to keep it from happening. It became apparent that his forceful counterinsurgent views were in conflict with peacemaking ones of the French government, facilitating Salan’s ousting from his position and Algeria at the close of 1958.<sup>31</sup>

The formal affirmation of de Gaulle’s governmental policy change to negotiate peace with the FLN in April 1961 marked the rebirth of Salan as a revolutionary of sorts. In response to the perceived French political betrayal, he organized the “General’s

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Stora, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Stora, 48.

<sup>29</sup> Stora, 70.

<sup>30</sup> Stora, 54.

<sup>31</sup> Stora, 75.

Putsch” as a *coup d’etat* against the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic. He believed the regular army and the European settlers would feel deserted by their government and support his cause. Supporters met Salan’s endeavor with half hearted backing and France put down the rebellion in a matter of days. He and his coconspirators disappeared underground but left the *Organisation Armee Secrete* (OAS) in their place.

General Salan assumed supreme command of the OAS, a secret underground army whose purpose was to keep Algeria French and to do so through the mobilization of those against French disengagement and those against Algerian independence.<sup>32</sup> The core group was the *pied noir*. They hoped to disrupt the path to negotiations upon which the FLN and de Gaulle had embarked. Under Salan, the OAS used terrorist tactics as well as collective demonstrations. Support continued to grow for the organization to the point Salan announced that before the end of 1961 his OAS army would number 100,000.<sup>33</sup> Salan’s OAS wreaked havoc upon both the Gaullists and the FLN, forcing the latter into negotiations that ultimately failed. Thus, French forces were engaged in COIN operations in both Algeria and France.

The third and most significant French figure from the French-Algerian War was General Charles de Gaulle. As a WWII veteran he garnered respect from his countrymen which proved useful during his resurgence. He quietly slid away from the limelight and waited for the right opportunity to take the helm. In late May 1958, the Fourth Republic came to an end and de Gaulle’s Fifth Republic became reality.<sup>34</sup> His intentions were not as clear as the people would have liked, but through speeches and statements policies began to emerge. Fervent French colonialists like Salan were extremely disheartened at the political direction of the Fifth Republic. De Gaulle spoke of understanding in Algeria and his intent to bring the Muslims and Europeans together. Only a couple months after assuming power, he offered the “peace of the brave” to which he attached no conditions other than an end to the violence.<sup>35</sup> De Gaulle thoroughly realized the drain Algeria was having psychologically, economically, and militarily. The French gained little from Algeria and other colonies compared to the costs. President de Gaulle removed any

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<sup>32</sup> Stora, 81-82.

<sup>33</sup> Stora, 82.

<sup>34</sup> Stora, 72.

<sup>35</sup> Stora, 73.

doubt about France's way forward stating, "Decolonization is in our interest, and, as a result, it is our policy."<sup>36</sup>

De Gaulle, no longer tip-toeing about the issue, created new enemies courtesy of his firmly stated intent. He believed it was time for a change from the status quo and indicated his steadfastness by saying, "the old Algeria is dead, and if you don't understand that, you will die along with it."<sup>37</sup> He hoped to foster cultural cooperation between Muslims and Europeans, a goal expected through his Constantine Plan. In October 1958, de Gaulle selected Constantine, which was a majority Muslim city, as the recipient of major economic and social reforms. The provisions were, "...the granting of sixty-two thousand acres of new land to Muslim farmers; the establishment of major metallurgical and chemical blocks; the construction of housing for a million people; regular employment for 400,000 new workers; schooling for two-thirds of children, with, in the next three years, schooling of all Algerian youth; and salaries and benefits equal to those in the metropolis."<sup>38</sup> De Gaulle walked a fine line between Algerian appeasement, domestic stability, and international approval. His realistic perspective of the conflict and move toward what he felt was inevitable ultimately led to Algerian self-determination and independence.

French and Algerian actors, in the foreground of a conflict torn territory, were pitted against one another, their violent efforts resulting in a number of key events throughout the eight years of insurgency. The beginning of the French-Algerian War was marked by a coordinated attack on November 1, 1954. The FLN struck simultaneously across several fronts, a violent outpouring of pent up frustration and angst from years of French rule. The casualty toll was lower than expected, as Algerians did not rise up in mass and join the FLN at the first sight of action. Instead, the attacks seemed more like a spasm of violence than the opening volley in what would become an eight year war. The fierce start of the nearly decade long struggle was only one of several turning points throughout the war.

Once it became apparent to the French that they were embroiled in more than just a miniscule uprising, they committed greater numbers of troops and effort to the cause.

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<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Stora, 80.

<sup>37</sup> Stora, 76.

<sup>38</sup> Stora, 98.

They needed more soldiers on the ground for combat and for security. The government could not readily discern FLN and ALN actors from the impartial or pro-French civilians, making it extremely difficult to eradicate the bad element within communities.

One tactic the French employed was resettlement. They forced entire villages to relocate to directly controlled and operated French camps. The idea was to separate the enemy from the civilian population where they attempted to hide. Some camps were a social upgrade for its inhabitants with clean water and suitable shelter. In these instances, operations ran somewhat smoothly and with little resistance.

Unfortunately for the French, this was not always the case. The government uprooted some residents from their livelihood, homes, and their preferred way of life. In these cases, the French played directly into the hands of the FLN by intensifying existing hatred and creating it where it was not before. Disconcerted Algerians confined to camps made FLN recruiting and limited unification easier. Ironically, the French resettlement policies actually hampered goals of separating the enemy from the noncombatants. A supposed noncombatant camp that began to grow insurgents within it presented a microcosm of the situation they were originally trying to solve. The FLN was able to foment support for its cause in these camps and increase the level of political will. Greater recruitment also meant an increased level of military ability simply by adding to the number of members willing and able to resist the French.

The murderous infighting that occurred from 1955 until the cessation of hostilities had considerable affect on the war. The FLN and MNA committed such atrocious acts of violence against one another that often the people viewed controversial French acts as mere child's play in comparison. The civil war, in which both participated, took a disastrous toll in lives, money, and support. In order to more effectively combat the FLN, members of the MNA joined the French Army, selecting what they deemed the lesser of two evils. In modern parlance, the insurgency lacked unity of effort. Instead of pooling their resources and capabilities to present a unified front against their primary enemy, the French and their supporters, they turned their guns toward each other. The result was a weaker and less effective overall movement. While insurgent political will was



still relatively intact and strong, the French had substantially lowered their military ability.

Egypt played a role in another crucial episode in the war that had lasting effects for the French. Just before official hostilities began, the FLN applied urgent pressure to Cairo's Gamal Abdel Nasser for maximum support in arms and propaganda.<sup>39</sup> As the war progressed, he became one of the most active FLN supporters and, thus, a French target. In addition he shocked the world by nationalizing the Suez Canal in the summer of 1956, giving the French yet another reason to oppose him. On November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, Great Britain and France allied with Israel in an operation to wrest the canal from Egyptian control. The mission was tactically successful, but unfortunately for the French, it ended in political failure. The United States and USSR pressured the French and British to depart only ten days later.<sup>40</sup> As they left with their tails between their legs, another bit of French pride and dignity was lost. The decrease in prestige translated directly to a decrease in political will as the idea of France as a world power became progressively more elusive. French military ability remained relatively constant but the ebbing will to fight in far-away places was taking its toll.

Another turning point in the war dealt with the recognition of other countries' support, namely Morocco and Tunisia, as vital to sustained FLN operations. Stopping the flow of weapons, equipment, supplies, money, and operatives themselves across the borders was a necessary step in quelling the violence. Algeria's eastern and western neighbors empathized with their plight against France and were often eager to help. According to Alistair Horne, "...running weapons across the Tunisian frontier became the main effort of the ALN; at one moment they totaled an average of a thousand a month."<sup>41</sup> Effectively sealing off the borders required an estimated 100,000 men, a cost France was not willing to pay.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (New York, NY: New York Review Books), 79.

<sup>40</sup> Stora, 48.

<sup>41</sup> Horne, 230.

<sup>42</sup> David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria: 1956-1958* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation), 62.

France simply did not have the numbers needed and instead turned to their past for help. Reminiscent of the fortifications erected prior to WWII to halt a German invasion, the French constructed border fortifications along the Algeria-Tunisian border similar to the Maginot Line. Dubbed the Morice Line, it consisted of miles of electric barbed wire and minefields monitored by sensors with areas covered by automatic cannons. Breaching was extremely difficult but if it occurred, a signal alerted the closest guards of the exact location of the intrusion where they could rapidly concentrate.<sup>43</sup> The Morice Line was effective from 1957 to the end of the war in 1962; only a handful of those that tried to cross actually made it. It successfully impeded the flow of vital supplies, weapons, and men to the FLN and played a key part in their dismantling. Sealing the Algeria-Tunisian border severely impeded the FLN ability to resupply and sustain operations and resulted in a drastic drop in military ability. Its effect on political will was minimal but because equipment was already at a premium, any decrease created exponential effects. The Morice Line contributed greatly to the military defeat of the FLN. Their overall capability level still remained at a considerable level due to implacable political will.

Historians observed that The Battle of Algiers, which took place in early 1957, proved another significant event in the conflict. Algiers, the Algerian capital city, was the bedrock location of FLN strength. It was also, thus, a major French objective. Much like in WWII when the Allies sought to reach the German capital of Berlin for its significance, gaining and maintaining control of Algiers would do the same to demoralize and destabilize the FLN. Friction had been mounting for months but the official start date was Jan 7, 1957. On that day, FLN terrorism exploded in the city's many districts, killing soldiers and civilians alike. France responded with a level of violence on par with the FLN. The French government gave the 10<sup>th</sup> Paratroop Division authority to assume police functions and to begin sweeps of Algiers. Their goal was to clear the FLN from the city using any and all means required. Once fully committed, it took only a week and a half for the French forces to so completely dismantle the FLN in Algiers, a city that subsequently remained terror free for more than two years.<sup>44</sup> Many consider French

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<sup>43</sup> Stora, 54.

<sup>44</sup> Galula, 142.

operations in Algiers as a defeat of FLN military forces. By the end of the operations, the FLN reeled militarily and was on the verge of collapse. Their political will remained intact but the French had critically depleted their ability to operate.

The violent methods in which the French eventually fought the Battle of Algiers were significant as well. Though it dealt a death blow to the FLN's military ability, it indirectly bolstered its political will. During the Algiers operations, allegations of torture surfaced. In the memoirs of General Aussaresses, he readily admits that torture and execution were tools used in Algiers. French leadership directed his forces to finish the FLN and made clear that top cover would alleviate any repercussions. Captured FLN members could expect to be severely beaten or tortured. The methods were effective in that the suspect gave up other FLN associates, locations and dates of planned attacks, and other pieces of vital information. Only on rare occasion was the information patently false, validating Aussaresses' techniques. Once the French reached the limits of the suspect's usefulness, officials took them away from the area, executed, and buried them in unmarked graves. The graves were never close to previous sites to avoid mass discovery.

General Aussaresses felt that he was justified in his actions as they were committed in service of his country under extraordinary circumstances. When he first began operations and realized that torture was the preferred *modus operandi*, he had misgivings. A policeman who could sense the General's apprehension put it in a way that changed him forever:

Just think for a moment that you are personally opposed to torture as a matter of principle and that you have arrested a suspect who is clearly involved in preparing a violent attack. The suspect refuses to talk. You choose not to insist. Then the attack takes place and it's extremely bloody. What explanation will you give to the victim's parents, the parents of a child, for instance, whose body was torn to pieces by the bomb, to justify the fact that you didn't use every method available to force the suspect into talking? ...act as if you always expect to have to face it and then you'll see the difficulty: torture a suspected terrorist or tell the parents of the victim that it's better to let scores of innocent people be killed rather than make a single accomplice suffer.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> General Paul Aussaresses, *The Battle of the Casbah: Counter-Terrorism and Torture* (New York, NY: Enigma Books), 17-18.

The policeman spoke what he believed to be the truth and General Aussaresses found the rationale he needed to accomplish his orders. Many French who still had faith in France as a beacon of justice and world leadership did not agree with Aussaresses' techniques. When word eventually leaked out about the use of torture in Algeria, an unstable French support structure weakened further and international eyes began to look closely into the North African affairs. International interest was a blessing for the FLN, and they exploited it as much as possible. The FLN did its best to ensure that global pressure to rethink its colonial ways remained on France and even worked to place the issue on the UN agenda.<sup>46</sup> Torture seems to have quite literally won the battle, yet lost the war.

Excessive violence provided another decisive moment in the war. With an enraged public already questioning the tactics used and human rights violations in Algeria and the conflict gaining ground in the global arena, France could not afford any further mistakes. On February 8, 1958, General Salan authorized bombers across the Tunisian border to pursue an ALN convoy. The aircraft targeted the village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef killing nearly seventy civilians and wounding another one hundred and thirty.<sup>47</sup> Hundreds of noncombatant casualties and the widespread coverage of the incident was extremely damaging to the remaining French prestige. It also acted as yet another arrow in the quiver of the FLN cause and the manifestation of Kilcullen's "accidental guerilla." Though they may have been struggling militarily, the FLN were slowly winning over the international world.

The final milestone in the war, before the sides agreed to a ceasefire, dealt with the French President, General de Gaulle. He recognized the seriousness of the situation and the steadily declining French status. Combined with international pressure to decolonize, he decided to make some concessions in hopes of repairing France's reputation. His goal was to strengthen the Muslim position in Algeria. He hoped to bring about changes that would create more equality between the *pied noir* and the Muslim-Algerians.

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<sup>46</sup> Stora, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Stora, 69.

The most significant considerations were the Constantine Plan and eventually the granting of a Muslim majority voice in the Algerian government. Some saw this as the foot in the door they needed to right the many injustices they endured daily. A strong voice in the government would mean legal reform that could restructure land allotments, industrial and farming sectors, and help build a stronger Algerian economy. It appeared to be the start for which many had hoped, yet the FLN ultimately rebuffed de Gaulle's concessions. The rejection indicated the FLN's strong political will and desire to continue the fight. The possibility of achieving independence early in the insurgency was little more than a dream.

By the late 50s, Algerians began to believe they could possibly achieve independence. They felt that if resistance was ineffective and no progress was occurring, de Gaulle would not attempt to negotiate. His willingness to bargain and the offer of concessions were proof to Algerians that they were indeed making progress. The prospect of a free Algerian nation strengthened FLN will to such a point that even if the French completely annihilated their military ability, the FLN overall capability level could prove too high to ensure total defeat. Had the French put forth de Gaulle's concessions earlier, before years of fighting jaded his enemy and increased their political will to an almost insurmountable level, it may have had a better chance of success. As it was, however, it appeared too little and too late.

De Gaulle's plan for helping Algeria grow under a French framework slowly morphed into one of *laissez faire*. The government gave the Algerians small concessions along the way, tastes of what they soon came to desire more and more: independence. By the end of the 1950s, it was doubtful that any compromise short of full autonomy and self-determination would be acceptable to Algeria. The proverbial light at the end of the tunnel was growing brighter for the Algerians with each passing day, bolstering political will to continue the struggle. De Gaulle knew that it was not economically sound saying, "Algeria is costing us—that is the least one can say—more than it is bringing in...Now our great

national ambition has become our own progress, the real source of power and influence.”<sup>48</sup>

De Gaulle wished to bring the focus back to domestic issues and repair France, spur her to the forefront of worldwide prestige again, and rediscover the French pride and mystique that once surrounded the European nation. There were others who disagreed adamantly with de Gaulle’s assessment and wanted to maintain the strength of the empire as the priority. The rift between political opponents was severe. Support waned internationally, however, for those hoping to preserve the empire as other nations voiced their unfavorable opinions regarding French colonialism. The price of colonization, the ongoing war, and the burgeoning negative international opinion dominated de Gaulle’s cost/benefit analysis. As a result, he believed finding a settlement was in the best interest of France.

The Evian talks became the means to the ends that de Gaulle sought. Opened in May 1961, they were the venue in which France and the FLN finally reached an agreement. OAS violence ramped up in a last attempt to divert efforts and attention from negotiations. The French suspended the talks only a month later and didn’t officially resume until almost a year later. The period between was marked with assassination attempts, murder plots, violent demonstrations and repressions, and a host of other brutal incidents. In both Algeria and France de Gaulle remained resolute stating in a press conference that the outcome in Algeria is imminent.<sup>49</sup> The second Evian conference opened on March 7, 1962, and eleven days later the antagonists signed the Evian accords with a ceasefire in place the next day.<sup>50</sup> Violence did not stop, however, as the OAS escalated its attacks on the FLN causing the latter to open talks with the former in hopes of attaining a cessation of attacks. On 1 July, the referendum for self determination passed with extreme ease, and two days later, France officially recognized Algerian independence.

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<sup>48</sup> Stora, 107.

<sup>49</sup> Stora, 257.

<sup>50</sup> Stora, 256-7.

The goal for which many had sought, fought, and died was realized. Yet, the turmoil and violence failed to dissipate. The *pied noir* and *harkis*, Muslims who supported the French, found themselves in grave danger that they could alleviate only by leaving Algeria. A dark aphorism captured their plight: “it was the suitcase or the coffin.”<sup>51</sup> The suitcase seemed to be the answer most chose, but for the *harkis*, it was not an easy choice. They would have to leave their homeland only to become an outcast in a land that failed to understand them or their beliefs. It was a no-win situation.

### **Unconventional War and Surrender**

The French-Algerian War provides an informative case that illustrates the combination of insurgency and surrender, between a state actor and a non-state entity. One might be tempted to point out that the study was fruitless because the insurgents did not surrender in the end, but such a conclusion would be premature. Despite their reduced ability, the FLN’s choice not to surrender and continue fighting is extremely telling. By 1959, the French, for all intents and purposes, militarily depleted the FLN. The operations in Algiers, the Morice Line, and the influx of French soldiers ensured that the military situation was well in hand. Why then did the war continue to wage for another three years? The reason was the insurgent capability, reflected in their will to prevail, which remained relatively high compared to decreasing French will to continue the conflict.

The French military ability remained relatively high throughout the war, but it was their decreased political will that drove down their capability level. The FLN, on the other hand, sustained their will, staying focused on their goal of independence. Their military ability was almost nonexistent, but their overall capability remained high enough to overcome French capability. While it is true the FLN did not surrender, the interplay of ability, will, and capability created an inferior French force and state that eventually abandoned their continued colonialist hopes for Algeria. The French departure resulted in independence and ultimate Algerian victory.

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<sup>51</sup> Stora, 77.

### **Analysis of Conventional and Unconventional Surrender**

The French-Algerian case study presents a different picture of surrender considerations when one compares and contrasts it against those of Germany and Japan in that surrender in unconventional war is not as straightforward as in conventional war. Capability is the main consideration in war in general, and these cases show how its level can determine the conflict's outcome; a relatively lower capability level can spell disaster for an adversary and bring them to the point where surrender is the only logical choice.

Inside capability, however, are the key components that really determine the overall level: ability and will. Both are critical to the survival of actors in war but their significance depends greatly upon the context surrounding them. In both the conventional cases examined, political will was at a relatively high level for all sides. The context centered on a threat to national survival. Germany and Japan, as well as the Allies, felt that defeat might equate to complete subjugation or, in the least, an unacceptable way of life, both unacceptable outcomes. Because the threat was so great to each side, their wills to fight remained at sufficient levels until the very end.

Though will was at a high level and nearly even, it was the military ability that carried more weight in the opponents' capability levels discussed in the conventional war cases. Affecting will, when the existential threat loomed large for both sides, ended up being an inefficient use of resources and proved relatively ineffective. Efforts against military ability, however, were more fruitful and, in the end, resulted in surrender.

Although the Allies depleted Germany and Japan militarily, they were not defeated in the same manner. Just prior to their surrender, Germany had little ability remaining to continue fighting the Allies. The Allies inflicted attrition on the Germans reducing them militarily to such a low level that their will was unable to sustain a capability level high enough to overcome the western powers. The Japanese, however, still had a formidable army in China. On paper they still maintained a relatively high military ability and, thus capability level, regardless of the destruction prevalent throughout their mainland. The key point, though, is that the Japanese force in China was not able to provide mainland defense in time and, as result, became a useless element in ability and, subsequently, capability calculations. Military ability did not have to be destroyed in Japan to be ineffective. It simply had to be isolated.



In Algeria, military ability was not the driving force behind capability levels; political will tilted the scale in favor of the FLN. At the beginning of the war, unlike in the conventional cases, a large disparity existed between the French and FLN military ability. The French outgunned the FLN in nearly every military aspect, and as the war progressed the gap grew larger. Government forces effectively cut off insurgents' supply/resupply of most of their crucial equipment, to include personnel. The French attacked FLN leadership; they harassed insurgent logistical lines and supply chains; they struck at FLN strongholds and destroyed its military arm. On paper, the French did everything they could do to destroy the FLN, militarily. Had the war been conventional, the story might have ended there, but it was an unconventional war and the intangible factor of political will came to the forefront.

The Algerian's will bolstered their capability to such a high level that it turned the tide of the war in their favor. Though their ability neared zero, the FLN's high level of will more than compensated for it. Just as in the conventional war cases, an existential threat was present, but only for one side. The Algerians knew their very existence hung in the balance. Many believed that living under continued French colonialism was not akin to living at all, and that independence was worth whatever cost they must pay.

While the insurgents' will soared, France's headed in the opposite direction. France's domestic political situation was enflamed with public outcry for the continued "faraway war." French citizens' support, as well as international support, for Algerian operations dwindled. French ability remained high, but their diminishing will was dragging their capability level down with it. The result was an overall higher capability level for the Algerians, and although, they had been defeated militarily, they still won their independence.

The unconventional nature of the fight meant the FLN's military ability was not the proverbial chink in the armor the French had hoped it would be. Had greater efforts been made and made earlier, to alter the political will of the FLN, events may have turned out differently. The intent here is not to argue a counterfactual, but instead to stress that the French forces' aim was defeating the FLN militarily, even though the FLN strength was its ability to sustain itself politically. The French attempted to alter the cost/benefit ratio and analysis of

their enemy by concentrating on an aspect that ultimately amounted to little in the calculation.

This is not to say that military ability is null and void in unconventional war. If violence is required to exact political change, some amount of military ability is necessary. That ability, however, can be attained through any basic level from rocks to spears and even hand-to-hand; sophisticated technology and extensive military abilities are not essential. If political will is deficient on either side, though, then even the most technologically advanced methods will prove impotent. If will to take up arms against an aggressor is lacking, however, the means available are unimportant as they will go unused anyway. The FLN's power derived from the will of its organization and people, and France was slow to recognize this nuance. Exertion directed at improper places, no matter how successful, can still end in defeat, as they did for the French in Algeria.

## CONCLUSION

*The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.*

*-- Carl von Clausewitz*

Context matters in understanding surrender. Whether the fight is between nation states or is between a non-state actor and a nation state is significant. In both conventional and unconventional war military ability and political will play key roles in determining the overall capability level of the actors involved. Comprehending this insight helps fully appreciate why insurgents surrender. By using ability, will, and ultimately, capability as lenses through which to examine the conventional war cases of German and Japanese surrender and the unconventional war case of the French-Algerian War (1954-1962), this paper illuminates the factors that lead to insurgent surrender.

There are differences in the correlation between ability and will with regard to surrender depending on whether the conflict is conventional or unconventional. In conventional war, military ability is the vital factor as the opposing sides tend to have and maintain a relatively equal political will. The extraordinary threat to the nation states' being drives a resolute will that affects their capability levels equally. Because wills essentially cancel each other out, military ability remains as the element that an antagonist can and should affect.

The interplay of ability and will is nearly opposite in unconventional war. The threat of survival drives the insurgent political will to high levels and maintains it. Military ability only plays a minimal role in insurgent's overall capability level, however. It is the will that sustains the capability. Similarly, it is the will that can be the deciding factor on the nation state side as well. Just as it drives insurgent capability higher, it can depress nation state capability to such low levels that despite high military ability levels, they are unable to overcome the insurgent capability.

## **Implications**

The inductive methodology used in this paper allows the distillation of some general propositions regarding military ability and political will that have far reaching effects in future conflicts the United States could face. The first concerns a conventional war with a near-peer competitor. Recently, strategists have voiced much apprehension about the path to take regarding a rising China or resurgent Russia. A war with either of these actors would, no doubt, be one of a conventional flavor. While it may, and most likely would, contain elements of the unconventional side, at its core would be uniformed, regular forces engaging in open operations against one another. The conventional character would mean that ability, and not will, should be the focal point of strategy and, thus, operations.

At face value, concentrating on military ability in a war against China, for example, may not raise too many eyebrows. Some will argue that technological superiority should facilitate the military depletion of such an adversary and is really not much of a concern. Others may contend that US war-fighting methods are cutting edge; an advantage others cannot match. While these assertions may contain elements of truth, manpower is a chief factor in ability one should not overlook.

The sheer number of people in China brings a foreboding sense of gravity to a conventional war situation with them. The US populace totals between three and four hundred million while China in closing in almost 1.5 billion. At almost five times the number in the United States, China has a distinct advantage in, perhaps, the greatest factor in military ability, personnel. A war with China would be a conventional one; would be one centering on military ability; and would be one of an extremely ambitious sort where the Chinese would literally outman the United States.

Another implication that this paper illuminates involves unconventional war and will of the nation state. Unconventional war hinges on will, and the natural predilection of a nation state is to focus efforts on how to affect the will of the insurgent. Military operations tend to focus on the target non-state actor, but because the capability levels of adversaries are relative, affecting one's own force levels can alter the relative gains between the adversaries. Specifically, an insurgent's will is generally high and remains so throughout the war so it becomes imperative for the nation state to maintain a

sufficient will level. The lack of an existential threat for the nation state tends to put an expiration date on the public's acceptance of "far away" wars where vital interests are not at stake. As such keeping will buoyed can be difficult in the long run and if not sustained, can end in disaster for the nation state.

Two methods of increasing or at least maintaining the national will in an unconventional war are to build urgency or build success. In building urgency, the point is to create or accentuate a threat that motivates the public. The threat may be there but it may not be apparent. It is, therefore, a leader's responsibility to ensure that the proper emphasis is present to sustain a fragile will susceptible to a short-term memory laden American public.

The relative inability to sustain political will when the proverbial "clear and present danger" is less than clear and, perhaps, not as near as expected. In 2002 and 2003, US leaders were making the case for an Iraqi invasion. They correctly understood the significance of public opinion in such an action and endeavored to build a compelling case of a threat that the international community had to keep in check. Despite significant foreign objection to a US invasion of Iraq, US leaders' reasoning was persuasive enough to garner the support of the majority of the nation. American citizens believed the threat was so grave as to justify invading a sovereign nation.

The resulting Iraq War of 2003 began with Operation Iraqi Freedom which pitted mostly US forces against Iraqi ones in a conventional fight on paper but the reality was Iraqi forces were clearly outmatched. Because of the conventional appearance, however, ability mattered more initially and Western forces prevailed with relative ease. As time wore on the conflict morphed into an unconventional one where ability was no longer the critical factor in the fight. Will became paramount, and the key component was not the enemy's will as much as it was that of the United States.

The political will to remain in force in Iraq began to flounder and threatened the success of the entire operation. By 2006, political will had fallen to a critical level, and prompt and effective efforts were required to salvage the situation. The continued American presence, apparent lack of operational progress, and increasing violence in Iraq supplied the US public with more than enough justification for their discontent. News reports of casualties and images of flag draped coffins only heightened the

dissatisfaction. This is the point where the second method of bolstering political will in an unconventional war came into play.

With introduction of General David Petraeus into the theater and the “surge,” building success became the deciding factor in increasing and sustaining the requisite American will. Petraeus’ progress, while localized at first, provided the lift that was necessary in the political environment. It ultimately bought more time to demonstrate even more gains, and became a self-sustaining process that safeguarded a tenuous US will. At the end of the day, the successes allowed US capability to remain at levels sufficient to contend with the ongoing insurgency.

Human beings are unpredictable. At times their behavior is erratic and seemingly irrational. At other times they act with poise and great thoughtfulness. Attempting to predict what a man or woman will do next is difficult at best unless the choices they have available to them are all undesirable...save one. The same holds true on the battlefield, because war is still a human endeavor. Counterinsurgency expert James Kiras sums it up nicely: “The arbiters of strategy are human beings and any realm of human activity, especially one based on competition between thinking, adapting adversaries, is governed ultimately by uncertainty, friction, and chance.”<sup>1</sup>

Man cannot be put in a tidy little box where outcomes are predetermined and easily explained. On the contrary, the inability to forecast results and choices participants will make surrounds the idea of war. Obvious calculations in war are nonexistent. The best for which one can hope is to guess correctly more often than not; it is a game of odds; a game of chance. Those same thoughts encompass this final section of work as it pertains to insurgency and surrender. Kilcullen understood the disposition of conjecture in war when he said, “...there is no standard answer to irregular warfare.”<sup>2</sup> To be honest, there is no standard answer to war in general, whether conventional, unconventional, or any of the myriad of types Beer’s lists as descriptors. What remains constant, however, is that will and ability make up capability and all have critical roles to play in war. It is up

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<sup>1</sup> James D. Kiras, *Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York, NY: Routledge), 7.

<sup>2</sup> David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 183.

to the deft statesman to determine in what type of war he is engaged and subsequently, upon which aspect to focus.

Unconventional war provides a means for lesser military and political powers to confront nation states and other large actors. It more evenly levels the playing field and as a result of its broad appeal, occurs in increasing frequency. To say that the days of conventional war are a thing of the past would be dangerous. Not all future wars will be unconventional in nature, but as long as non-state actors desire ways of challenging states to address wrongs, insurgencies will remain prevalent. Sun Tzu knew the acme of skill was to win without fighting and the same remains true today. If, however, the choice to fight is made, better understanding the complexity of military ability and political will as it pertains to the character of an insurgent's decision to surrender may quickly become the preferred acme of skill.

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